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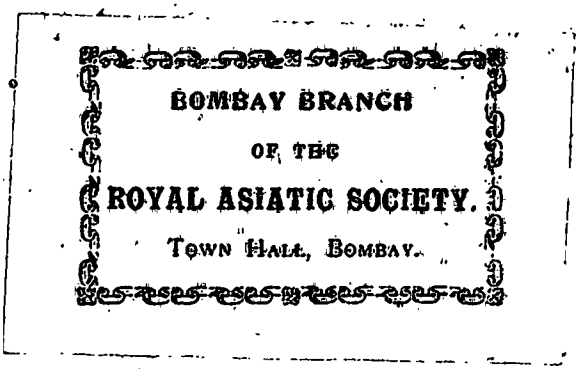

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THE SPANISH CONQUEST

IN AMERICA

AND ITS RELATION TO THE HISTORY OF SLAVERY AND TO THE GOVERNMENT OF COLONIES

BY

ARTHUR HELPS

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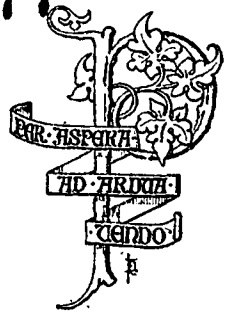

THE SECOND VOLUME

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JOHN W. PARKER AND SON WEST STRAND
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[*The Author reserves the right of Translation*]

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CHAPTER I.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE FLEMINGS—EMIGRATION SCHEME OF LAS CASAS—LICENCE TO IMPORT NEGROES—NEW SCHEME OF LAS CASAS FOR COLONIZATION—THE KING'S PREACHERS.

THE life of a state has often been compared to that of an individual: indeed, the same terms are in common language habitually applied to both. We speak of the youth and the old age, the vigour and the decay, the growth or the torpidity, of one as of the other. But, in truth, such is the richness of Creation, that no two great things are found to be very much alike, when you come to examine them deeply; and most similes, even those of a prosaic kind, belong to the realms of fiction, and are but pleasantries, with which men beguile themselves and educate their imaginations.

The most striking fact about the life of an individual is its terrible continuity. To others this may not be so clear, but to the man himself it is fatally so. Considerable, and outwardly abrupt, events take place in a man's life; but they do not surprize him much, and they never interrupt his sense of the continuity of his being. Hence the inevitable remarks of the aged, that

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all life is but a dream, and that their youth seems to them but as yesterday. Madness may produce an apparent pause, but sanity knows nothing of the kind.

In the life of a state it is quite different. That being an aggregate, or rather a compound, of individual lives, is liable to great abruptness; and changes take place in it, compared with which, anything that occurs in the life of an individual is in no respect commensurate.

Great change in the government of Spain.

In this history we have now come to one of those signal and abrupt changes which affect the lives of states. How changed is the government of Spain in the brief interval that has elapsed from the discovery of the New World to the arrival of King Charles in his dominions! King Ferdinand is dead; Queen Isabella is dead; Columbus is dead; Ximenes is dead; the old councillors, who stood round the thrones of the Catholic Monarchs —pillars of the State—are either dead, discarded, or enfeebled. A new order of things has arisen: the counsels, the interests, and the modes of thought of another race, the Flemings, are, for the moment, predominant in a part of the world which they had never influenced before. How ancient, now, the long contest between the Moor and the Christian appears! It is not a change of scene in Spain, it is a change of drama; and the advent of a monarch so remarkable and so powerful as Charles the Fifth makes it a world-wide drama, in which all the nations of any importance in Europe are to take a part,—and each of them a new part. For it is singular, and

Flemings in power.

foreshadows great events, that large and sudden changes have at the same time taken place in other prominent states of Europe, though in none of them so great, and so pregnant with future change, as in the kingdom of Spain.

It is almost fearful to contemplate the way in which America, immediately after its discovery, becomes mixed up with all the political and religious turmoil of the Old World; and is hurried about like a captive monarch in the train of a restless conqueror, who, amidst the bustle of other conquests, has not time to decide upon what shall be done with his unfortunate prisoner.

It must not be supposed, however, that the injury done to the Indies by its connection with the Spanish court was of a direct kind, or such as can be traced to cruelty, corruption, or even to neglect, in high places. All that can be said is, that the affairs of the Indies did not meet with that continuous attention which they absolutely needed; and that their immense importance was not fully recognized. The historian is always an apologist, and in that capacity is rejoiced to have any bright spot to dwell upon in the picture he has to present. I would rest the defence of the Spanish government on this one fact alone—on the gladness with which those, who have to write the early history of America, will ever turn from the confused transactions of unbounded rapacity and blood-guiltiness, which must darken and sadden the narrative when its course is wholly in the colonies, to the proceedings of the mother country, however inadequate these may have

Affairs of the Indies not sufficiently attended to.

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been to the occasion,—which, it must be remembered, was without precedent in the annals of mankind.

Those who have never lived at courts have been very apt to magnify the vice and treachery of such places, just as those who dwell in the country are prone to believe in the singular wickedness of towns; but, after all, Virtue, like the rest of us, being sometimes very weary of dulness, quits groves and primeval settlements, to take up her abode with polished people. And, certainly, whenever the course of this narrative conducts us to the court of Spain, even the most cursory reader cannot fail to have the pleasure of observing that there was at least sympathy for the injured, and generally in some quarter or other an earnest endeavour to redress the wrong, which stand in striking and favourable contrast with the terrible oppressions and misdeeds that meet his eyes at every turn in the pages which record the proceedings of the Spanish colonists. It is like coming into daylight again after sudden darkness. I cannot illustrate this contrast better than by an incident which occurred in Trinidad about this period of the history, and which will serve to show what enormities were occasionally perpetrated in the West Indies, even under the supervision of the Jeronimite Fathers. Such a narrative, moreover, will give us a deeper interest in the efforts of the Protector of the Indians, will explain his vehemence, and tend to justify his views.

Always some redress at the court of Spain.

Here, too, I must premise that Las Casas

may, according to my observation of his writings and character, be thoroughly trusted whenever he is speaking of things of which he has competent knowledge. Seeing his vehemence, an ordinary observer might be apt to doubt his accuracy, though there has never been a greater mistake, or a much more common one, than to confound vehemence with inaccuracy. Far from being an inaccurate man, he was studiously accurate, which is to be seen throughout his history in all manner of little things. His countenance,* too, is that of a first-rate lawyer, extremely benevolent, but at the same time indicating great acuteness, brilliancy, and even elegance, in the character. He was not especially fitted for an ecclesiastic,† excepting in so far as a man of the world, if essentially a good man, may make an excellent ecclesiastic, as often happens. He was, moreover, a gentleman, and in his history shows delicacy and kindness in suppressing names where there is no occasion to mention them, and where the bringing persons forward would give them or their descendants unnecessary pain. I make no excuse for giving occasionally these remarks upon Las Casas, as he is one of the principal authorities for these times; and to

Accuracy of Las Casas.

His portrait.

* The portrait of Las Casas is to be seen, if I recollect rightly, in a private collection at Seville.

† In a very naïve way he lets you see somehow or other in his history, that it was not so much care for the Faith, though he was a deeply religious man, as natural pity that led him to espouse the cause of the Indians, which, especially in those times, would have been thought so much the inferior motive.

understand them, it is requisite to understand him.

Juan Bono's story.

The following narrative of what occurred at Trinidad, to hear which we are going to quit the court of Spain for a time, is given on the authority of Las Casas.

There was a certain man named Juan Bono, and he was employed by the members of the *audiencia* of St. Domingo to go and obtain Indians. He and his men, to the number of fifty or sixty, landed on the island of Trinidad. Now the Indians of Trinidad were a mild, loving, credulous race, the enemies of the Caribs who ate human flesh. On Juan Bono's landing, the Indians, armed with bows and arrows, went to meet the Spaniards, and to ask them who they were, and what they wanted. Juan Bono replied, that his crew were good and peaceful people, who had come to live with the Indians; upon which, as the commencement of good fellowship, the natives offered to build houses for the Spaniards. The Spanish captain expressed a wish to have one large house built. The accommodating Indians set about building it. It was to be in the form of a bell, and to be large enough for a hundred persons to live in. On any great occasion it would hold many more. Every day, while this house was being built, the Spaniards were fed with fish, bread, and fruit by their good-natured hosts. Juan Bono was very anxious to see the roof on, and the Indians continued to work at the building with alacrity. At last it was completed, being two stories high,

and so constructed that those within could not see those without. Upon a certain day Juan Bono collected the Indians together, men, women, and children, in the building, to see, as he told them, "what was to be done." Whether they thought they were coming to some festival, or that they were to do something more for the great house, does not appear. However, there they all were, four hundred of them, looking with much delight at their own handiwork. Meanwhile, Juan Bono brought his men round the building, with drawn swords in their hands: then, having thoroughly entrapped his Indian friends, he entered with a party of armed men, and bade the Indians keep still, or he would kill them. They did not listen to him, but rushed against the door. A horrible massacre ensued. Some of the Indians forced their way out, but many of them, stupefied at what they saw, and losing heart, were captured and bound. A hundred, however, escaped, and, snatching up their arms, assembled in one of their own houses, and prepared to defend themselves. Juan Bono summoned them to surrender: they would not hear of it; and then, as Las Casas says, "he resolved to pay them completely for the hospitality and kind treatment he had received," and so, setting fire to the house, the whole hundred men, together with some women and children, were burnt alive. The Spanish captain and his men retired to the ships with their captives: and his vessel happening to touch at Porto Rico when the Jeronimite Fathers were there, gave occasion to Las Casas to complain of this proceeding to the Fathers, who, however,

Juan Bono's story.

The depth of his perfidy.

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did nothing in the way of remedy or punishment. The reader will be surprized to hear the Clerigo's authority for this deplorable narrative. It is Juan Bono himself. "From his own mouth I heard that which I write." Juan Bono acknowledged that never in his life had he met with the kindness of father and mother but in the island of Trinidad. "Well, then, man of perdition, why did you reward them with such ungrateful wickedness and cruelty?" "On my faith, Padre, because they (he meant the auditors) gave me for destruction (he meant *instruction*) to take them in peace if I could not by war."

Juan Bono's story.

Such were the transactions which Las Casas must have had in his mind when he was pleading the cause of the Indians at the court of Spain; and that man would have been more than mortal, who, brooding over these things, and struggling to find a remedy for them, was always temperate in his language and courtly in his demeanour. I feel confident that St. Paul would not have been so.

Spanish government on the death of Ximenes.

Returning now to the court of Spain, which this short absence in barbarous parts will have made more welcome to the reader, I will recount what took place immediately after the death of the great Cardinal. On that event the administration of the affairs of Spain fell inevitably into much confusion. The King, as mentioned before, was only sixteen years old; and it could not be expected that he was yet to have much real weight in affairs. It has been a common saying, that he did not give promise, at this period of

his life, of the sagacity which he afterwards manifested. This is a mistake. Nobody knew more of the Spanish court than Peter Martyr. He was a remarkably sincere man, and his testimony in favour of the young King's abilities is very strong.* The truth is, that Charles was as a boy what he turned out to be as a man—grave, undemonstrative, cautious, thoughtful, valiant. No doubt he was very observant; and I think it is manifest that the information he now obtained about Indian affairs, swayed him throughout his reign, and, as it will hereafter appear, influenced him in the advice he gave in a great matter connected with the government of the Spanish colonies, at a period when he had withdrawn for the most part from all human affairs. At this time of his life he trusted to his councillors, like a sensible boy, was very constant to them, and exceedingly liberal to all persons about him.

Charles the Fifth as a boy.

The two men who had now the supreme authority in Spain, were Chièvres,† the King's former Governor, and his present Lord Chamber-

* "Quoad Regem nil est quod possit ultra desiderari. Est a natura omni egregia dote præditus."—*Epist.*, 608. See also *Epist.*, 113, on the quickness with which the King learnt Spanish.

† He is called familiarly Chièvres by writers of that period; but his name was William de Croy, Lord of Chièvres, in Hainault, afterwards Marquis or Duke of Aarschot.

From the description of Chièvres, given by Sandoval (*Hist. del Emperador Carlos V.*, lib. 2, sec. 35), it will be seen that he was a dignified, eloquent, judicious person, and an adroit man of business:—

"Fué este Xevres hombre de buena presencia, y claro juyzio, hablava bien, y era en los negocios cuydadoso, y quando en ellos avia dificultades, inventava medios para bien despacharlos."

That last point mentioned in his qualifications, inventive adroitness in the conduct of affairs, may remind the reader of what

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lain,—and the Grand Chancellor, Jean Salvage, called by the Spaniards Selvagius. The Chancellor settled all matters connected with justice; the other, those connected with patronage. Las Casas speaks well of the disposition of the Flemings, especially of their humanity; and he seems to think that the Chancellor was an upright man. Peter Martyr, on the other hand, inveighs furiously against the rapaciousness of the Flemish courtiers, and especially against that of Chièvres and the Chancellor. He says that all things at court are now venal: the Flemish courtiers are harpies and hydras; their power of swallowing money he compares to wells and whirlpools; and, dropping the metaphorical style, tells us in plain prose, that they remitted to Flanders one million one hundred thousand ducats. Added to which, they appear to have taken but little delight in Spain as a country to live in, and were only anxious to get back to their own northern regions, as if they were the regions of the blest, "notwithstanding they do not deny that in their own country they live the greater

Chièvres and Selvagius rule Spain.

The Flemish courtiers.

Bacon notices in reference to those who gain the favour of princes:—

"'Vidisti virum velocem in opere suo? coram regibus stabit, nec erit inter ignobiles.' Here is observed, that of all virtues for rising to honour, quickness of dispatch is the best; for superiors many times love not to have those they employ too deep or too sufficient, but ready and diligent."—*Advancement of Learning.* On "the wisdom touching negociation."

Chièvres is accused, like the rest of the Flemings, and I fear with some justice, of having been rapacious and avaricious. But the charges of Spanish historians on this head against the Flemings must always be looked at with careful scrutiny before they are entirely credited.

part of the year most wretched, by reason of the thick ice." Then they make no account of the Spaniards, who "redden with shame, bite their lips, and murmur secretly."* One thing, however, Peter Martyr mentions as a great discredit to the Flemish Chancellor, which will not be thought so in these times. It appears that Selvagius was averse to the powers exercised by the Inquisition; and, on an occasion when the Chancellor was ill, Peter Martyr observes, "It would be for the good of the sacred Inquisition that the Chancellor should be gathered to his fathers."† The practice of bribery on the part of the neophytes is alleged as the cause of the Chancellor's hostility to the Inquisition; but surely it may well be imagined that a lawyer would be very likely to view with great disfavour the mode of proceeding with witnesses adopted by the Inquisition.

Perplexity of the Flemings.

The Flemish ministers were not without their especial perplexities. They did not know whom to trust, or what to do: and they were too cautious to act without sufficient knowledge. They did not even know the language of the country they governed. The King himself was busy learning it. In this state of things the public business languished.

The affairs of the Indies, however, gained

* *Epist.*, 608.

† "Sacræ Inquisitionis hæreseos expedit ut majores visat suos. Nisi Atropos ejus filum disruperit, sacra prostrabitur inquisitio et miseri Regis fama sternetur, qui se patitur a talibus Harpyis gubernari."—*Epist.* 620.

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much more attention than might have been expected at this juncture. It happened thus: as Las Casas had been at St. Domingo, on his way to appeal against the proceedings of the Jeronimite Fathers, he had seen those Franciscan monks from Picardy, who had now been some time in the island, and, as the reader may remember, had formed part of Pedro de Córdova's company, when he set out for the Terra-firma. These monks, with others, had signed letters of recommendation in favour of Las Casas, and by good fortune some of the foreign monks were known to the Grand Chancellor, and their signatures proved a favourable introduction for the Protector of the Indians. He soon enlarged the advantages arising from this introduction; and at last became on such terms with the Chancellor, that this great functionary used to give Las Casas all the letters and memorials from the colonists or their representatives, and the Clerigo then turned them into Latin and made his remarks upon them, showing what was true and what was false, or wherein he approved, or dissented from, the views of the writer. Finally, the Grand Chancellor spoke of Las Casas to the King, and received his Highness's commands that they two should consult together, and provide a remedy for the bad government of the Indies.*

Las Casas made known to the Grand Chancellor.

The Chancellor and Las Casas legislate for the Indies.

Again, therefore, great hopes might naturally be entertained that something effectual would

* "Dominus noster jubet quod vos et ego apponamus remedia Indis,—faciatis vestra memorialia."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 99.

now be done on behalf of the Indians. Las Casas prepared his memorials, taking for his basis the plan which the Jeronimites had carried out to Hispaniola, and which by this time they had partially acted upon. He added, however, some other things; amongst them, that of securing to the Indians their entire liberty. And he provided a scheme for furnishing Hispaniola with labourers from the mother country.

The outline of this scheme was as follows. The King was to give to every labourer willing to emigrate to Hispaniola his living during the journey from his place of abode to Seville, at the rate of half a *real* a day throughout the journey, for great and small, child and parent. At Seville the emigrants were to be lodged in the *Casa de la Contratacion* (the India House), and were to have from eleven to thirteen *maravedis* a day. From thence they were to have a free passage to Hispaniola, and to be provided with food for a year.* And if the climate "should try them so much," that at the expiration of this year they should not be able to work for themselves, the King was to continue to maintain them, but this extra maintenance was to be put down to the account of the emigrants, as a loan which they

Proposed emigration from Spain.

* "La órden de la poblacion della hizo de esta manera; que el Rey diese á cada labrador que quisiese venir á poblar en ella desde que partiese de su poblacion hasta Sevilla de comer, para lo qual se señaló á cada persona chico con grande medio real cada dia; y en Sevilla se les diese posada en la casa de la Contratacion, y once á trece maravedises para comer cada dia, de manera que tanto se dava al niño de teta, como á sus Padres.

De allí pasage y matalotage hasta esta Isla, y en ella un año

Book IX. Ch. I. were to repay. The King was to give them lands (his own lands), furnish them with ploughshares and spades, and provide medicines for them. Lastly, whatever rights and profits accrued from their holdings were to become hereditary. This was certainly a most liberal plan of emigration. And, in addition, there were other privileges held out as inducements to these labourers.

Licences to import negroes suggested by Las Casas.

In connection with the above scheme, Las Casas, unfortunately for his reputation in after ages, added another provision, namely, that each Spanish resident in the island should have licence to import a dozen negro slaves.

The origin of this suggestion was, as he informs us, that the colonists had told him, that if licence were given them to import a dozen negro slaves each, they, the colonists, would then set free the Indians. And so, recollecting that statement of the colonists, he added this provision. Las Casas, writing his history in his old age, thus frankly owns his error: "This advice, that licence should be given to bring negro slaves to these lands, the Clerigo Casas first gave, not considering the injustice with which the Portuguese take them, and make them slaves; which advice, after he had apprehended the nature of the thing, he would not have given for

He afterwards owns his error.

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de comer hasta que ellos lo tuviesen de suyo. Y si la tierra los probase tanto que no estubiesen para trabajar mas tiempo de un año, que lo que demas de un año que el Rey les diese, fuese prestado para que se lo pagase quando pudiese."— Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 101.

all he had in the world. For he always held that they had been made slaves unjustly and tyrannically: for the same reason holds good of them as of the Indians."* The above confession is delicately and truthfully worded—"not considering"—he does not say, not being aware of; but, though it was a matter known to him, his moral sense was not watchful, as it were, about it. We must be careful not to press the admissions of a generous mind too far, or to exaggerate the importance of the suggestion of Las Casas.

Negro slavery not introduced into the Indies by Las Casas.

It would be quite erroneous to look upon this suggestion as being the introduction of negro slavery. From the earliest times of the discovery of America, negroes had been sent there; my readers have already seen Ferdinand's letters about them; and the young King Charles, had, while in Flanders, granted licences to his courtiers for the import of negroes into Hispaniola. But, what is of more significance, and what it is strange that Las Casas was not aware of, or did not mention, the Jeronimite Fathers had also come to the conclusion, that negroes must be introduced into the West Indies. Writing in January, 1518, when the Fathers could not have known what was passing in Spain in relation to

* "Este aviso de que se diese licencia para traer esclavos negros á estas tierras; dió primero el Clérigo Casas, no advirtiéndo la injusticia con que los Portugueses los toman y hacen esclavos; el qual despues de que cayó en ello no lo diera por quanto habia en el mundo. Porque siempre los tuvo por injusta y tiránicamente hechos esclavos: porque la misma razon es de ellos que de los Indios."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 101.

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this subject, they recommended licences to be given to the inhabitants of Hispaniola or to other persons, to bring negroes there.* From the tenor of their letter it appears that they had before recommended the same thing. Zuazo, the judge of *residencia*, and the legal colleague of Las Casas, wrote to the same effect. He, however, suggested that the negroes should be placed in settlements, and married. Fray Bernardino de Manzanedo, the Jeronimite Father, sent over to counteract Las Casas, gave the same advice as his brethren about the introduction of negroes. He added a proviso, which does not appear in their letter (perhaps it did exist in one of the earlier ones), that there should be as many women as men sent over, or more.†

The Jeronimites give the same advice as Las Casas.

Selvagius and Adrian approve this advice.

The suggestion of Las Casas was approved of by the Chancellor and by Adrian the colleague of the late Cardinal: and, indeed, it is probable

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* "En especial que á ellas se puedan traer negros bozales y para los traer de la calidad que sabemos que para acá combiene que Vuestra Alteza nos mande embiar facultad para que desde esta isla se arme para ir por ellos á las Islas de Cavo verde y tierra de Guinea ó que esto se pueda hacer por otra cualquiera persona desde esos para los traer acá. Y crea Vuestra Alteza que si esto se concede demas de ser mucho probecho para los pobladores destas Islas y rentas de Vuestra Alteza serlo ha para que estos indios sus vasallos sean cuidados y relevados en el trabajo y pueden mas aprobechar á sus ánimas y á su multiplicacion." — Gerónimos *al* Rey, 18 *de Enero, de* 1518. (*Simancas. Descripciones y poblaciones*). — *Coleccion de* Muñoz, MS., tom. 76.

† "Los de la Española todos piden licencia para llebar negros pues no bastan los Indios. Esto á todos allá nos pareció bien, siendo tantas ó mas hembras que varones." — *Memorial que dió en Valladolid* Frai Bernaldino de Manzanedo *por Hebrero, de* 1518.—*Coleccion de* Muñoz, MS., tom. 76.

there was hardly a man of that time who would have seen further than the excellent Clerigo did. Las Casas was asked, what number of negroes would suffice? He replied that he did not know; upon which a letter was sent to the officers of the India House at Seville, to ascertain the fit number in their opinion. They said that four thousand would at present suffice, being one thousand for each of the islands, Hispaniola, Porto Rico, Cuba, and Jamaica. Somebody now suggested to the Governor De Bresa, a Fleming of much influence and a member of the Council, that he should ask for this licence to be given to him. De Bresa accordingly asked the King for it, who granted his request; and the Fleming sold this licence to certain Genoese merchants for twenty-five thousand ducats, having obtained from the King a pledge that for eight years he should give no other licence of this kind.

Licence to De Bresa for 4000 negroes.

The consequence of this monopoly enjoyed by the Genoese merchants was, that negroes were sold at a great price, of which there are frequent complaints. Both Las Casas and Pasamonte (rarely found in accord) suggested to the King that it would be better to pay the twenty-five thousand ducats and resume the licence, or to abridge its term. Figueroa, writing to the Emperor from St. Domingo in July, 1520, says, "Negroes are very much in request: none have come for about a year. It would have been better to have given De Bresa the customs' duties (*i. e.* the duties that had been usually paid on the importation of slaves) than to have placed a

Unexpected result of the monopoly.

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prohibition."* I have scarcely a doubt that the immediate effect of the measure adopted in consequence of the Clerigo's suggestion was greatly to check that importation of negro slaves, which otherwise, had the licence been general, would have been very abundant.

Before quitting this part of the subject, something must be said for Las Casas which he does not allege for himself.† This suggestion of his about the negroes was not an isolated one. Had all his suggestions been carried out, and the Indians thereby been preserved, as I firmly believe they might have been, these negroes might have remained a very insignificant number in the general population. By the destruction of Indians a void in the laborious part of the community was being constantly created, which had to be filled up by the labour of negroes. The negroes could bear the labour in the mines much better than the Indians; and any man who perceived that a race, of whose Christian virtues and capabilities he thought highly, were fading away by reason of being subjected to labour which their natures were incompetent to endure, and which they were most unjustly condemned to,

Excuses for Las Casas.

* "Negros son muy deseados: ningunos han venido ha cerca de un año. Mejor huviera sido darle los derechos al de Bresa que poner estanco."—Al Emperador Príncipe Rey: Licenciado Figueroa. Santo Domingo, 6 de Julio, 1520.—*Coleccion de* Muñoz, MS., tom. 76.

† Las Casas is much misrepresented by Herrera, who gives an account of the suggestion as if it were made, not in addition to, but in substitution for other measures.

might prefer the misery of the smaller number of another race treated with equal injustice, but more capable of enduring it. I do not say that Las Casas considered all these things; but, at any rate, in estimating his conduct, we must recollect, that we look at the matter centuries after it occurred, and see all the extent of the evil arising from circumstances which no man could then be expected to foresee, and which were inconsistent with the rest of the Clerigo's plans for the preservation of the Indians.

I suspect that the wisest amongst us would very likely have erred with him: and I am not sure that taking all his plans together, and taking for granted, as he did then, that his influence at court was to last, his suggestion about the negroes was an impolitic one.

One more piece of advice Las Casas gave at this time, which, if it had been adopted, would have been most serviceable. He proposed that forts for mercantile purposes, containing about thirty persons, should be erected at intervals along the coast of the Terra-firma, to traffic with merchandize of Spain for gold, silver and precious stones: and, in each of these forts, ecclesiastics were to be placed, to undertake the superintendence of spiritual matters. In this scheme may be seen an anticipation of our own plans for commercial intercourse with Africa. And, indeed, one is constantly reminded by the proceedings in those times of what has occurred much later and under the auspices of other nations.

Another suggestion made by Las Casas.

Of all these suggestions, some of them cer-

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tainly excellent, the only questionable one was at once adopted. Such is the irony of life. If we may imagine superior beings looking on at the affairs of men, and bearing some unperceived part of the great contest in the world, this was a thing to have gladdened all the hosts of Hell.

Turning our thoughts from bad angels to bad men, it is vexatious to find the Bishop of Burgos creeping back to power just at this period. For a long time the Bishop had been quite in the background: and Conchillos, Ferdinand's minister, who also formerly had great weight in the government of the Indies, finding himself without any authority, had retired to his estate. But now, owing, it is said, to the effect of sixteen thousand ducats, or because the Bishop had been so long engaged in the Indian administration that his absence was felt (for Las Casas is by no means certain of the bribery), the Bishop was recalled to the Council; and he opposed, as quietly as he could, the excellent plans of Las Casas for colonization. The Bishop said, that for these twenty years he had been endeavouring to find labourers to go to the Indies, and that he had not yet found twenty men who would go. Las Casas engaged to find three thousand. The Clerigo, too, could give a reason why the Bishop had not succeeded in getting labourers, saying that it was because the Indies had been made a penal colony.

Bishop of Burgos recalled to power.

At the time of these altercations in the Council, the court had been moving from Valla-

dolid, in order that the King might take formal possession of the throne of Aragon. In the course of the journey, at Aranda on the Douro, Las Casas fell ill, and was left behind, much regretted, as he tells us, even the boy King saying "I wonder how Micer Bartholomew is" (*Oh qué tal estará Micer Bartolomé*). The King, young as he was, was likely to approve of a sound-hearted man like Las Casas, and, though a person who has but one subject is apt to be rather troublesome, yet his devotedness elicits a certain interest for him. Moreover, anything that has life and earnestness in it, is welcome to sombre people. I am particular in noticing this liking of the young King for Las Casas, as I cannot but attribute some of the King's future proceedings with regard to the Indians to the information he was silently acquiring from the Clerigo at this period. Thus it is that good seed is not lost, which should be a comfort to those who in their own time make great efforts, and seem to do nothing. In a few days the Clerigo, whom the court left ill at Aranda, got better, and he overtook them before they reached Saragossa. The Grand Chancellor received him very kindly. The great business of the reformation of the Indian government, of which the part only that was to be no reformation had been accomplished, was now to be proceeded with. Again, however, it was delayed,—this time by the illness of the Bishop of Burgos, who must now be consulted; though, as Las Casas retained his full favour with the Chancellor, of which there is good evidence, the

Las Casas falls ill.

The King's regard for him.

Las Casas recovers.

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Bishop was not able to thwart the views of the Clerigo. Indeed, Las Casas received at this juncture the evidence of Father Roman concerning the horrible cruelties committed by one of the captains of Pedrarias, named Espinosa, of which mention has before been made,* and which caused the destruction of 40,000 souls:† and Las Casas took care to bring this evidence before the Chancellor, who sent him with it to the Bishop.

Father Roman's evidence.

At last, on the Bishop's recovery, the Junta for the business of the Indies was on the point of being called together, "to-morrow" it may be (Las Casas is speaking of a certain Friday when he is to sup with the Chancellor), when, in the evening of that day, the Chancellor's servants tell him that a little page of his, a nephew, who was ill in the house, is dead, at which he appeared very sorrowful. "To-morrow" the Chancellor himself feels ill, and does not go to the palace. There are symptoms of fever. On Monday, however, he is well enough to go to the window of his room. We may imagine with what anxiety Las Casas heard of the illness: it may be that he was the very person who, ever on the watch, perceived the Chancellor at the window. But the

A great reverse for Las Casas.

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* See ante, book 6, chap. 2.

† "Entre tanto recibió una Carta el Clérigo de Sevilla del Padre Fray Reginaldo de quien arriba en el Capítulo noventa y ocho hizimos mencion, haciéndole saber, como habia llegado allí de la tierra firme un Religioso de San Francisco, llamado Fray Francisco de Sant Roman, que afirmaba por sus ojos, haver visto meter á espada, y echar á perros brabos sobre quarenta mill ánimas de Indios."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 102.

fever was not to be baffled: they did not bleed the poor man in time, according to the theory of those days; he died; and on Wednesday he was not even on the face of the earth. "And the Grand Chancellor being dead, of a truth there died, for that time, all hope of a remedy for the Indians."

A second great reverse for the Indies.

This, as Las Casas remarks, was the second time,* when the "salvation" of those nations (the Indians) seemed assured, and when a reverse occurred, and hope altogether vanished away. So frightfully valuable is the life of a great man in a despotic state: and it may console us, who live under representative governments, for a certain mediocrity and difficulty in the management of public affairs, that at least we are not subject to these dreadful reverses occasioned by the loss of one man. What is gained by us is mostly gained upon the increase of insight in large bodies of men, and will live and augment itself with the advancement of the general thought of the nation.

Bishop of Burgos in full power again.

Upon the Grand Chancellor's death, the Bishop of Burgos instantly regained all his old influence in the government of the Indies; and down went the Clerigo "into the abysses," as he expresses it.

* I suppose the first time was when, according to Las Casas, Ximenes took Indian affairs in hand; but I should name three occasions.—1. The appointment of the Junta who made the laws of Burgos. 2. The appointment of Jeronimites. 3. The present one, viz., the appointment by the King of the Chancellor Selvagius and Las Casas to provide a remedy for the Indies.

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Nothing was to be done with the interim Chancellor, a very phlegmatic Dean,* who praised the Clerigo's unwearied efforts, but could not summon up energy enough to assist him: "and certainly," to use our historian's own words, "when a man of a choleric temperament, like the Clerigo, and an excessively phlegmatic person, like the good Dean, have to transact business together, it is no slight torment to each of them. However," he slyly adds, "it did not kill the Dean, such was his phlegmatic patience."

Council for the Indies. 1518.

At this time, on the Bishop of Burgos's suggestion, an especial Council for Indian affairs was formed. He was appointed president; Hernando de Vega and Zapata, both of whom had connections in the colonies, and who had themselves been deprived of Indians by the first law of Ximenes, were of this Council; Peter Martyr, the historian, was put upon it; also Don Garcia de Padilla, the only person in the Council likely to take up new views. The appointment of such a council was very disheartening to Las Casas, who, nevertheless, like a brave man as he was, went about his work just as if all were smooth before him and shining brightly upon him.

Jeronimites recalled.

The first act of the Bishop was, to recal the Jeronimite Fathers. Though for some time before this they had possessed no real power (we find that their letters to the authorities in Spain were never answered), yet their presence and their influence must still have been productive of

* The Dean of Besançon.

good, and must at least have been felt as a considerable restraint upon evil-doers. Those, therefore, who cared for the welfare of the Indies, must have been sorry to see the last vestige of the policy of the great Ximenes now altogether effaced from the Indian government.

It has been stated,* that, on the Jeronimite Fathers placing the Indians in settlements, the small pox came among them and carried off numbers. As I said before, I think this cause of the destruction of the Indians (a very convenient one for the conquerors to allege) has been exaggerated. And I am confirmed in this opinion by a letter written by Zuazo, which must have arrived at court about four or five months before this time, in which he says nothing of the small pox, but assigns as one of the main causes of the decrease of the Indians the frequent change of government that there had been, which led to new *repartimientos*, and to changes of climate and water for the Indians, which were fatal to many of them, as in a number of small things, passed rapidly from hand to hand, even with care, the number is soon diminished.

Effect of the small pox in the Indies overrated.

Just at this time, when the Bishop of Burgos was carrying it with a high hand in the Council of the Indies, a little gleam of good fortune broke most unexpectedly upon Las Casas and his cause. In all his affairs at court, he had principally been conversant with the late Chancellor, yet some

* See Oviedo and Herrera.

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knowledge of the business for which Las Casas worked at court with such indomitable perseverance was doubtless generally circulated amongst the courtiers. Amongst them there was a certain Monsieur de Bure (a young man, as I conjecture), who, it appears, had a desire to make himself acquainted with this business of the Indians. He caused his wish to be made known to the Clerigo: they had a meeting in the palace; and Las Casas acquainted him fully with the whole state of the case. Monsieur de Bure was much affected by the Clerigo's narration. De Bure was a powerful man, being the nephew of De Laxao,* who enjoyed great influence with the King, and who, being the *sommelier du corps*,† slept in the King's room. He was a person celebrated for his wit, and probably on that account his society was exceedingly relished by the grave young King. Monsieur de Bure brought Las Casas to his uncle De Laxao, who also was much interested in the account which Las Casas gave of Indian affairs, and the result was, that he found protectors in these powerful men of the King's household and council.

Flemish courtiers favour Las Casas.

At this time the Spanish court sent over

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* Carlos Puper, Lord of Laxao.

† *Sommelier* was corrupted into *Sumiller* by the Spaniards. The following is the definition of the office. "La persona muy distinguida en palacio, á cuyo cargo está la asistencia al rey en su retrete, para vestirle y desnudarle, y todo lo perteneciente á la cama real. *Summus præfectus cubiculi regis.*

"Es nombre introducido en Castilla con la casa de Borgoña." —*Diccionario de la Lengua Castellana por la Academia Española.*

Rodrigo de Figueroa to take a *residencia* of the auditors of St. Domingo, and of the judges appointed by the Admiral. A certain Doctor de la Gama was appointed to take a *residencia* of the Lieutenant Governor of San Juan, and of Velazquez in Cuba: and Lope de Sosa was sent to succeed Pedrarias as governor of the Terra-firma, and to take a *residencia* of the same Governor. Information having been given that the inhabitants of Trinidad were cannibals, the King's Council resolved to order war to be made upon them; but Las Casas prevailed upon the Council to insert in the instructions which Figueroa was to take with him, that, as the Clerigo Bartolomé de Las Casas asserted that the natives of Trinidad were not cannibals, Figueroa should, on arriving at St. Domingo, examine carefully into the truth of this statement. He did so, and found that these poor islanders were not cannibals, but very quiet people, as Figueroa himself afterwards bore testimony.

Residencias taken of several authorities in the Indies.

The natives of Trinidad not cannibals.

What Figueroa and these other authorities accomplished may be seen at another time; but the cause of the Indies was now to be maintained at the Spanish court; and Las Casas was the only champion who perseveringly did battle there in its behalf.

At this period the Clerigo received a letter from Pedro de Córdova, in which, after telling of some horrible exploits of the Spaniards in the island of Trinidad, and expressing himself in a way that seems to show he was much dissatisfied with the proceedings of the Jeronimite Fathers,

Pedro de Córdova's letter.

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the good prelate of the Dominicans went on to say, that he wished that one hundred leagues on the coast of the Terra-firma about Cumaná were set apart by the King, to be entered solely by the Franciscan and Dominican monks, for the purpose of preaching the gospel there. His desire was, that no layman might be permitted to enter, so that no hinderance might occur to the good work: and he suggested, that, if Las Casas could not obtain a hundred leagues, he should endeavour to obtain ten; and that, if he could not get such a tract of land on the Terra-firma set apart for this purpose, he should try and get some little islands, called the Islands of Alonso, about fifteen or twenty leagues from the coast. The object was, that this land set apart might be a city of refuge for the poor Indians, and a place wherein to teach the gospel to them. Pedro de Córdova added that, if none of these requests should be granted, he would recal the brethren of his Order from those parts, for it was of no use their preaching "when the Indians saw those who called themselves Christians acting in opposition to Christians."

Pedro de Córdova's plan.

The good Father imagined that Las Casas was very powerful at court, not knowing how things had been changed by the death of the Chancellor, and by the return of the Bishop of Burgos to power. Las Casas, however, did what he could to further the request of Pedro de Córdova, but with no avail, the Bishop of Burgos saying, the King would be well advised indeed to grant a hundred leagues without any profit to

himself. Such was the reply, as Las Casas notes, of one of the successors of the apostles, who laid down their lives for the sake of conversion. And, as for profit to the King, "no profit did he derive for forty years and more from those hundred leagues, or from eight thousand in addition, except to have them ravaged, desolated, and destroyed."*

Emigration scheme of Las Casas.

As nothing could be done at present in the scheme suggested by Pedro de Córdova, Las Casas returned to the prosecution of his own plan, namely, the sending out of labourers to the West India islands. In this he was favoured by Cardinal Adrian and the other Flemings; and he succeeded in obtaining all the provisions and orders that he wanted for that purpose. Amongst others, he procured that a certain esquire called Berrio, an Italian, should be appointed by the King, and called the king's captain. He was to accompany Las Casas, to be under his orders, and to give notice by trumpet in the various towns of the purpose which Las Casas came to announce. This man, however, had no intention of really serving under the Clerigo, but he went to the Bishop of Burgos, and secretly got his orders altered from "Do what he shall desire you," to "Do what may seem good to you."†

The Clerigo with his squire and other attendants set off on his expedition for procuring emi-

* Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 104.

† "Manda el Obispo luego que se raya la Cédula, y que donde decia hagais lo que él os dixere, hagais lo que os pareciere."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 104.

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grant labourers. He directed his course from Saragossa towards Castille, assembling the people in the churches and informing them of the benefits and privileges they would acquire by emigrating. Numbers consented to go, inscribing their names in a book. At Berlanga, out of a population of two hundred, more than seventy inscribed their names. It gives a curious insight into those times, to see that the inducement with these people to emigrate, was to get away from the seignorial rights over them. They came to Las Casas with the greatest secrecy; and he relates this speech made by four of them. "Señor, none of us wishes to go to the Indies for want of means here, for each of us has a hundred thousand maravedis of *hacienda* and more, but we go to leave our children in a free land under royal jurisdiction."*

Las Casas pursues his emigration scheme.

A motive for emigration.

As was to be expected, the lords of these places were very hostile to Las Casas; but their opposition was a trifling evil compared to the insubordination of Berrio. This man often requested leave to go to Andalucia, where his wife was. The Clerigo would not allow this; they would come, he said, to Andalucia in good time; they were upon duty now: but no remonstrances sufficed to retain Berrio, who came one day, booted and spurred, to the Clerigo, and asked if he had any orders for Andalucia. Las Casas then learnt for the first time that this Berrio was in fact no servant of his, but free to act for himself: and the man accordingly took his departure

* Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 104.

in this most wilful fashion. The mischief did not stop here. Berrio went to Andalucia, and, having collected about two hundred vagabonds, tapsters and roysterers and idle people, anything but labourers, went with them to the India House at Seville. The official persons there, having received no orders about them, were in complete perplexity what to do. They shipped them off, however, in two vessels which happened to be on the point of sailing at that time; and the unfortunate rabble of emigrants arrived in this way at St. Domingo. There again the official people had received no orders to provide anything for the emigrants, many of whom died; others crowded into the hospitals; others returned to their former mode of life; and others preyed upon the Indians. Thus ended this miserable expedition; and this ending may justly be attributed to the outrageous conduct of the Bishop of Burgos in altering a despatch, after it had been signed.

Failure of the emigration scheme.

Las Casas resolved to return to court. He was now fully assured of the facility of obtaining emigrants, but he did not wish to do any more at present than he had done in the matter, considering the probable opposition of the great lords and the defection of Berrio, and also taking into account the readiness of the common people to emigrate, which made it only a subject of more urgent concern to consider carefully what was to be done. When the Bishop of Burgos had heard the Clerigo's account of his expedition, in which he told his Lordship that he could answer for procuring not only three thousand but eight thousand

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labourers, the Bishop said it was "a great matter, a great matter indeed;" but, as usual, nothing came of this speech, only that by repeated and energetic remonstrances Las Casas prevailed upon the Council to send wine and provisions after the poor wretches who had already sailed. These supplies, however, came too late. And so ended this plan for the benefit of the Indies.

With all our aids and appliances of modern times, we, too, find emigration to be no light undertaking—one of the main difficulties being that the emigrants are generally of one class, so that the peculiarities of that one class are liable to be developed to the uttermost, and have to be provided for all at once.

At this time the court removed to Barcelona. A controversy that the Clerigo had there with the Bishop of Burgos about the emigration scheme deserves to be recorded. Las Casas would not in any way further the proposed emigration, without being assured of the emigrants receiving support for a year after their arrival. This was a fundamental part of his plan, and finding that it was not to be conceded, and that other persons were being sought for, to take charge of the emigration, he wrote to the towns which he had previously visited, and warned the people against going. When Las Casas was arguing one day before the Council of the Indies for the allowance of a year's support to be made to the emigrants, the Bishop said that the King would spend more with those labourers, than with an

Las Casas contends for support of emigrants.

armada of twenty thousand men (the Lord Bishop was much more versed in fitting out armadas than in saying masses), to which Las Casas replied: "It appears then to your Lordship, that after you have been the death of so many Indians, you wish to be the death of Christians also. But it was put in that courteous way" (I do not myself see the courtesy), "though not without sarcasm. I do not know," he adds, "whether the Bishop, who was no fool, took it."

Las Casas abandons the emigration scheme.

In fine, however, nothing could be made of this obdurate Bishop, and Las Casas, almost glad to be freed from the responsibility of the emigrating scheme, immediately turned his fertile mind to another plan, which he thought might with worldly men appear more feasible.

A new and notable plan.

There was still in his thoughts the original plan of Pedro de Córdova, for enclosing, as it were, a hundred leagues along the coast of the Terra-firma, and forbidding the entrance of laymen into it. That scheme, however, was liable to the objection of the Bishop of Burgos, that it held out no solid pecuniary advantage to the crown. These two things, profit for the King and the preaching of the gospel, must therefore be combined; and from this idea came the following ingenious proposition.

I may mention here, in the way of parenthesis, that a new Grand Chancellor, a learned and good man, according to our historian, had come from Flanders. This was Charles the Fifth's celebrated Chancellor, Arborio de Gattinara, a man

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whose name is found in cónnection with several of the greatest events of the age in which he lived.

The Chancellor Gattinara concerned in great affairs.

He was employed, in 1508, in negociating the League of Cambray; he was president of the parliament of Burgundy, from which office he was driven by the nobles; he made the speech for his master to the electors of the Empire on the occasion of Charles being chosen Emperor; he opposed in the most resolute manner* the adoption of the treaty of Madrid, which set Francis the First at liberty; and even refused to affix his signature to that treaty,† a formality that belonged to his office; and finally Gattinara is said to have been concerned in settling the celebrated peace of Cambray. Just before his death, in 1529, he was made a cardinal.

His moderation.

His moderation in reference to the Reformation is well known, and coincides with the high esteem which he had for Erasmus.‡ I imagine him to have been one of the earliest of those professional statesmen, if the phrase may be used, who were afterwards so trustfully employed by Charles the Fifth, and in another generation by Elizabeth of England. Gattinara and Granvella correspond to Burleigh, the elder Bacon, and the

* See the Chancellor's speech.—Guicciardini, vol. 8, p. 261. Milano, 1803.

† See Guicciardini, p. 284.

‡ "Mercurinus a Cattinariis; Cancellarius, quoties de te mentionem facit sacrosanctam? Adeo ut cum eum nuper inviserem (laborabat ille podagra), et interrogaret me, si fuerat mihi aliquando consuetudo tecum, et responderem, fuisse, sed parvam, subito adderet, Revera fuit tibi consuetudo cum Christianissimo viro et eruditissimo, mihi semper amicissimo. Aderant tunc Valdesius et Scepperus. Idem Cancellarius scribit jam tibi."—Erasmi, *Epistolæ;* No. 469, Lugd. Bat. 1703.

other statesmen who stood round the throne of that Queen.

He favours the Clerigo.

Gattinara favoured Las Casas almost as much as his predecessor in the chancellor's office, Selvagius, had done. The Clerigo says that the Chancellor loved him much;* and as Las Casas was only a poor suitor, whose claims for attention were no other than the justice and the goodness of his cause, it is greatly to the credit of this Chancellor that he was always willing to give audience to Las Casas, and that he uniformly defended him. Whether, however, Gattinara had not quite as much influence as Selvagius (and it is certain he was not on such good terms with Chièvres), or whether he himself was won over to a certain extent by the Bishop of Burgos, it is clear that this mischievous prelate had more power now in Indian affairs than he had possessed under the former Chancellor.

Gattinara, though mixed up with so many great affairs in France, in Germany, in Italy, and in Spain, was never perhaps seen so closely, nor, I imagine, to such advantage, as he will be in the following pages.†

The new proposition which Las Casas had to

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* "Acudia él (el Clérigo) á los Flamencos, mayormente á Monsieur de Laxao que moria por él; y al gran Chanciller que habia venido de nuevo, el qual despues que supo bien la negociacion y lo que pretendia el Clérigo, lo amó mucho, y era él que donde quiera que se hallava con el Rey ó en los Consejos, como fuese de todos por su oficio Cabeza; lo habia y ayudaba y favorecia, y en todo le dava gran crédito."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 132.

† It is a great peculiarity of the

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bring forward under this new dynasty (for the change of chancellors was almost a change of dynasty to him), is a very remarkable one. It formed the turning point of the Clerigo's own life, and in its consequences had the widest influence upon the fortunes of the New World. The substance of it was as follows:—

The plan of Las Casas for colonizing the Terra-firma.

Las Casas engaged to find fifty Spaniards, which he thought he could do amongst the colonists, moderate and reasonable men, who would undertake the good work he had in hand for them out of Christian motives, at the same time having a fair view to furthering their own interests by lawful means. He limited himself to fifty, because fifty would be more manageable than a greater number, and would be sufficient for peaceful converse with the Indians.

These fifty were to subscribe two hundred ducats each, making ten thousand in the whole, which he thought would be enough to provide the requisite outfit and sustenance for a year, and presents for the Indians.

The fifty were to wear a peculiar dress, white cloth with coloured crosses, like the Knights of Calatrava, but having some additional ornament. Much ridicule was afterwards thrown on this part of the scheme; and the proposed knights obtained

His knights.

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narrative of Las Casas, that, whenever he brings his reader in contact with the great men of his time, he presents them in their homeliest appearance. What has already been told in this history of the great Cardinal Ximenes, will perhaps have made him more familiar to the student of history than any other transaction in which the Cardinal was engaged.

the name of *sanbenitos*, in allusion to the dress of heretics worn at an *auto da fé*. The object, however, of having a peculiar dress, was to distinguish this band from any Spaniards whom the Indians had seen before. They were also to bring a message to the Indians, of a new tenour, telling them that they were sent to salute them from the King of Spain, who had heard of the evils and oppressions they (the Indians) had suffered, that they were to give them presents as a sign of amity, and to protect them from the other Spaniards who had done them injury.

Las Casas says that he had it in his mind, if God had prospered the work, to get the Pope and the King to allow this body to be formed into a religious fraternity.

For the profit of the King, Las Casas held out the following inducements;—that he would pacify the country assigned to him, which he requested should begin a hundred leagues above Paria* and extend down the coast a thousand leagues;† Inducements to the King.

* That means a hundred leagues to the eastward of Paria, *i. e.*, taking the river Dulce as the eastern limit. "Conviene á saber desde cien leguas arriba de Pária, del Rio que llamaban el rio dulce, que agora llamamos el Rio y la tierra de los Arvacas, la costa abajo hasta á donde las mill leguas llegasen."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 131.

† It was ultimately restricted to about two hundred and sixty leagues.

A letter has recently been brought to light, bearing the signature of Las Casas, but without date, which must, however, have been addressed by him to the Grand Chancellor in the course of these negociations.

It begins by stating that he does not wish to lose more time in a thing which is so manifestly good as this business, and so "practicable," unless, as he adds, the time which is lost here should prevent it (*sino que lo que aquí se pierde de tiempo pudiéndose escusar*).

He mentions that he first asked for a thousand leagues;

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that after being settled there three years, he would contrive that the King should have fifteen thousand ducats of tribute from the Indians and the Spanish settlements, if there should be any; and that this tribute should increase gradually,

that when the matter was referred to the Council of the Indies, they reduced it to six hundred, and in those six hundred there were only two provinces, namely Cenu and Santa Martha, which produced gold, and that these provinces were included in a hundred leagues. He also mentions that he had asked for the pearl fisheries, but that they had been "taken" from him. This, however, he had acceded to, on the condition that those Spaniards who had the permission to go to the pearl fisheries, should be prevented from injuring and scandalizing the Indians. He intimates, that now Cenu is about to be taken from him, and that, if so, it will greatly diminish the inducements which he can hold out to secular persons to join in his enterprize, and aid him with their funds; "for," he adds, "as your Lordship may judge, we shall find few laymen who will be inclined to go and spend their estates, and to die and labour, solely to serve God, to convert souls, and to preach their faith to the infidels," (*porque, como v. s. puede juzgar, pocos seglares hallarémos que se quieran mover á yr á gastar sus haziendas y á morir y trabajar como dicho es solamente por servir á Dios y convertir animas y predicar su fee á los ynfieles*).

He puts it plainly to the Grand Chancellor, whether Lope de Sosa, who, as the reader will recollect, went out to supersede Pedrarias in the government of Darien, will not have enough to govern, and his people to destroy, without the province of Cenu. "Sin la provincia del Çenu queda á Lope de Sosa harta tierra y muy rica de oro desde el Darien versus occidentem para que él pueda governar y su gente destruyr."

After offering many good reasons to the Chancellor for the request being granted, he prays that, at least, the province of Cenu may be divided between himself and Lope de Sosa, or, if that be not possible, that the onerous conditions which he had undertaken for himself and his knights might be diminished accordingly.

The minute of the Chancellor upon the letter is so far favourable, that it directs the last request of Las Casas to be complied with. "Segnor Don Garcia: plàceat videre hanc scripturam, et, postquam iste bonus pater se submittit rationi, placeat dirigere capta (query, "*capitula*"): minuendo onus pecuniæ et populationum conformiter ad diminutionem territorii contenti in prima capitulatione: et prout melius cum eo poteritis concordare postquam in hoc rex nihil ponit: et lucrari potest sine periculo dampni: experientia

until, at the tenth year, and thenceforward, it should amount to seventy thousand ducats.

Las Casas also offered to found three settlements in the course of five years, with a fortress in each of them. Moreover, he would obtain geographical knowledge about the country assigned to him, and give the King information on that head: and he would do what he could to convert the natives without its being any charge to the King.

Demands of Las Casas.

The Clerigo on his part demanded, that the King should ask for a brief from the Pope, to allow the Clerigo to take with him twelve priests, Franciscans and Dominicans, who should come voluntarily: and that His Holiness should give a plenary indulgence to all those who should die on the voyage, or in the act of assisting in the said conversion.

He also demanded that he might take ten Indians from the islands, if they would come with him of their own accord.

He also made it a provision, that all the Indians who had been taken from that part of the

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enim docere poterit fructum negociationis: et deus qui potens est inspirare poterit ad ea: quæ ad exaltationem orthodoxæ fidei spectant: Cujus meriti particeps eritis rem recto oculo discutiendo."

The valuable document from which the above extracts are made, is to be found in a collection of Spanish letters, which are being edited by Mr. Henry Stevens, of Vermont, U.S. I cannot omit the opportunity of expressing my cordial thanks to this gentleman for the liberal manner in which he has always aided my researches, both by his great bibliographical knowledge, and by lending me some of the most rare works relating to Spanish America, whenever they have come into his possession.

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Terra-firma which might be assigned to him, should be placed in his charge for the purpose of being restored to their own country.

Inducements to the knights.

We come now to the inducements for the fifty to combine in this enterprize. They were to have the twelfth part of the revenues accruing to the King, and to be enabled to leave this to their heirs for ever.*

Then they were to be made Knights of the Golden Spur, and to have a grant of arms. Such of them as the Clerigo should appoint were to have the government of the proposed fortresses and of the settlements. There were also many other provisions and exemptions made in their favour (such for instance as their salt being tax-free), which we need not recount.

Each of the fifty might import three negroes—half of the number men, half women,† and hereafter, if it should seem good to the Clerigo, they might have seven more negro slaves each. It is evident, therefore, that at this time Las Casas had not discovered his error with regard to the negroes.

No *encomiendas* to be in the settlement of Las Casas.

On behalf of the Indians, Las Casas demanded that the King should give assurance that, neither at this present nor at any future time, should the Indians within the limits agreed upon, being in due obedience and tributary, be

* This was granted only for four descents.

† Rather a difficult matter; but I suppose it means that the total number brought over should consist of an equal number of males and females.

given to the Spaniards in *encomiendas,* or in slavery of any kind.

There was to be a treasurer, a contador, and a judge.

Also, as a false relation of what should take place in these territories might be carried to the King, the King was to promise, that on no account would he make any change in the order of things, as regarded this colony, without first hearing from the treasurer and the contador.

King to make no change on *ex parte* statements.

Several other matters of detail were provided for; but the above is an outline of the most important portions of this proposal made by Las Casas. Like anything of long extent and large bearings, it presents certain points of attack; but, upon the whole, if sufficient power were given to the head of the colony, it was likely to work well. The plan may remind the reader of feudal times, and of an abbot with a large domain and a retinue of knights to do his bidding. Those abbacies, probably, did not work ill for the poor in their neighbourhood.

The great scheme being now ready, in which it may be observed that Las Casas asked nothing for himself, he explained it to the Grand Chancellor and the other Flemings, who received it favourably, and desired him to lay it before the Council of the Indies. There it was very ill received by the unflagging enemy of Las Casas, the Bishop of Burgos, and by the rest of the councillors. Still they did not utterly reject it, but sought by delay to put it aside. At this

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time the Grand Chancellor and Chièvres were obliged to go to the borders of France, to treat of peace with the French king. Las Casas urged the settlement of his business; and, on mentioning to the Flemings that he would have to leave the court on account of his poverty, Monsieur de Bure and a relation of his advanced the Clerigo money, for fear he should have to leave while the Chancellor was absent. The favour of Las Casas with the Flemings on the King's arrival in Spain has been attributed to a wish to oppose the policy of Ximenes and the Spanish councillors. These gifts to Las Casas cannot be accounted for on this supposition. He says that these men had no interest to serve; and there is every reason to believe, that they acted from a regard for the man and a belief in the goodness of his cause. The Chancellor and Chièvres returned; but still Las Casas could make no way in the Council of the Indies. Not daunted, however, his fertile genius and amazing vigour stirred up new means for furthering his cause, and there is thus brought before us one of the most interesting episodes in the whole of this narrative.

Las Casas receives gifts.

It has been a common practice at courts, to have certain set preachers. For the Spanish court at this time there were eight preachers to the King: and Las Casas bethought himself of laying his troubles and the wrongs of the Indians before these ecclesiastics, and beseeching their favour and assistance. I will here give

their names; as I think we ought not to grudge naming men, who, though they come but once or twice before us, and speak but a few words in the great drama of history, do so in a way that ought to confer reputation upon them. First, then, there were the brothers Coronel, Maestro Luis and Maestro Antonio, both very learned men, doctors of the University of Paris; then there was Miguel de Salamanca, also a doctor of the same university, and a master in theology, afterwards Bishop of Cuba; then Doctor de la Fuente, a celebrated man in the time of the late Cardinal Ximenes, of his University of Alcalá; then brother Alonso de Leon, of the Franciscan Order, very learned in theology; brother Dionysius, of the Order of St. Augustin, "a great preacher and very copious in eloquence:" the names of the other two Las Casas had forgotten.

The King's preachers.

The King's preachers and Las Casas formed a Junta of their own. They admitted one or two other *religiosos* into it, a brother, as it was said, of the Queen of Scotland,* being one of them. This last mentioned noble monk was one of those who had come over from Picardy in the year 1516 or 1517; and who himself had gained experience of

They form a Junta.

* "Por este tiempo (1516, or early in 1517,) vinieron quatorce religiosos de Sant Francisco, todos extrangeros de Picardia, personas muy religiosas, de muchas letras y muy principales, y de gran celo para emplearse en la conversion de estas gentes, y entre ellos vino un hermano de la Reyna de Escocia (segun se decia) varon de gran autoridad, viejo muy cano y todos ellos de edad madura, y que parecian como unos de los que imaginamos Senadores de Roma."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 94.

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the proceedings of the Spaniards on the coast of Cumaná. The bold Scot wished to propose to the Junta a large question of the most searching and fundamental nature, namely, "With what justice or right an entrance could be made into the Indies after the manner which the Spaniards adopted in entering those countries."*

Each day the Junta thus constituted met at the monastery of Santa Catalina, and were, as the historian describes, a sort of antagonist Council to that held daily on Indian affairs under the auspices of the Bishop of Burgos. They met at the same hour as the Indian Council, perhaps the better to evade observation, for I imagine their proceedings were kept quite secret.

The court preachers employ themselves in Indian affairs.

The conclusion this Junta came to, was, that they were obliged by the Divine Law to undertake to procure a remedy for the evils of the Indies: and they bound themselves to each other by oath, that none of them were to be dismayed or to desist from the undertaking until it should be accomplished.

They resolved to begin by "the evangelical form of fraternal correction." First, they would go and admonish the Council of the Indies; if this had no effect, they would then admonish the Chancellor; if he were obdurate they would admonish Monsieur Chièvres; and, if none of these admonitions addressed to the officers of the

* "Y aun les propuso una question diciendo, que con que justicia ó poder se pudo entrar en estas Indias de la manera que los Españoles entraron en ellas."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 132.

crown were of any avail, they would finally go to the King and admonish him.

If all these earthly powers turned a deaf ear to fraternal admonitions, they, the brethren, would then preach publicly against all of these great men, not omitting to give his due share of blame to the King himself.*

This resolution, drawn up in writing, they subscribed to; and they swore upon the cross and the gospels to carry out their resolve.

* "En tal caso públicamente predicasen contra todos ellos, dando su parte de la culpa al Rey."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. 3, cap. 132.

CHAPTER II.

LAS CASAS SUCCEEDS IN OBTAINING A GRANT OF LAND ON THE PEARL COAST.

ALL combinations of human endeavour have their intense periods of life, as individual men have theirs; and each generation of mankind is surrounded by forms of thought, and by institutions embodying such forms, which are in every variety of growth or decay. It is always cheering to see any such institutions in the full vigour of action and purpose, or at least before they have degenerated into mere forms, in which state, however, like the dead boughs on trees, they will remain almost an indefinite period of time.

The King's preachers, whose boldness in combining for good has been shown in the preceding chapter, were part of an institution which had evidently much vitality remaining in it.

We left these preachers thoroughly intent upon their great work of admonition, which they immediately began to put in practice in the following manner.

On a certain day, entering the Council of the Indies suddenly, to the great astonishment of the Bishop of Burgos and the rest of the Council, the preachers requested leave to speak, and bro-

ther Miguel de Salamanca, the eldest of them, made an earnest and explicit speech, in which he said, that he and his brethren were aware of the cruelties and wrongs that had been committed in the Indies, by which the Christian religion was defamed; and that the Indies were being depopulated, to the disgrace of the crown, "for," as the Scripture says, "in the multitude of the people consists the dignity and honour of the King."* Then, after saying that the preachers wondered how such things had happened in the Indies, considering the prudence and merits of the Council, he added that they knew not where to lay the blame, except upon the persons who had been charged with the government of those parts for many years. Then he alleged that the office of the preachers in the court was such as to make it incumbent upon them to impugn anything that might be contrary to the Divine Majesty; wherefore they had come to enquire how such evils had been permitted without a remedy having been provided for them, and to see how some remedy might now be provided. Finally, declaring that divine reward would attend upon the Council if they did provide a remedy, and punishment if they did not, he concluded with an apology for the appearance in the council-room of himself and his brethren.

The King's preachers exhort the Council.

Up rose the Bishop of Burgos, and with all the majestic pride of an ancient priest, "as if

* "In multitudine populi dignitas regis: et in paucitate plebis ignominia principis."—*Lib. Proverbiorum*, cap. 14.

they had come in the times of the Gentiles to pull down the temple of Apollo," thus replied: "Great is your presumption and audacity to come and correct the Council of the King. Casas is at the bottom of this business. Who gave the King's preachers authority to meddle in the matters of government, which the King transacts through his Councils? The King does not give you your bread for that, but for you to preach the gospel to him."

Hereupon Doctor de la Fuente replied: "In this business Casas is not concerned, but the *casa* (house) of God, whose servants we are, and in whose defence we are bound, and are ready, to lay down our lives. Does it appear to your Lordship to be presumption, that eight masters of theology, who might go and exhort a whole Council-General in things pertaining to the Faith and to the government of the Universal Church, should come and exhort the King's Council? We have power to come and admonish the Councils of the King in respect of what they may do wrong, for it is our office to be of the Council of the King. And for this we have come here, my Lords—namely, to exhort you, and to require that you amend the great errors and injustice that are committed in the Indies, to the perdition of so many souls and with such offence to God; and, unless you do amend these things, my Lords, we shall preach against you as against those who do not keep God's laws, and who do that which is not convenient for the service of the King. And this, my Lords, is to preach the gospel and to fulfil it."

The King's preachers magnify their office.

Doctor de la Fuente, of Alcalá, seems to have imbibed some of the force and directness of the great founder of his University, the late Cardinal Ximenes. The Council were astounded at the Doctor's bold words, and began to soften down a little. Don Garcia de Padilla, now taking up the controversy, said, "This Council does its duty, and has made many very good provisions for the benefit of the Indies, which shall be shown to you, although your presumption does not deserve it, that you may see how great is your rashness and pride."

To this Doctor de la Fuente replied. "My Lords, you have but to show us these provisions, and if they should be good and just, we shall admit them to be so; but if bad and unjust, we shall give to the Devil them and whosoever would sustain and not amend them; and we do not believe that your Lordships will be amongst those persons."

They demand to see the laws for the Indies.

Finally, after smoother talk on the part of the Council, and probably with a little more mildness on the other side, it was concluded that the preachers should come the next day, and hear the provisions which had been made for the benefit of the Indies.

Accordingly they did come, and heard the numerous provisions read, which, from the earliest times of the Catholic Sovereigns downwards, had been made on this subject, but which, unhappily, had been carried into execution by persons of a very different temper of mind from that of the statesmen, philanthropists, and monarchs who had

been concerned in issuing the various ordinances. When the preachers had heard these official documents read, they asked for time to deliver their opinion in writing. This opinion comes handed down to us not by a speech put into their mouths on the part of some imaginative historian, nor does it merely rest on the Clerigo's recollection; but, when he wrote his history, he had before him the copy of the preachers' opinion in the handwriting of brother Miguel, who was the secretary to this clerical Junta.

The written opinion of the King's preachers.

The document differs in some considerable respects from the opinions of Las Casas, which shows that the preachers exercised an independent judgment. They commence with a graceful and modest exordium, in which they recount the mode of their interference in this matter, praise the laws that had been read to them on their second attendance at the Council, but at the same time intimate their opinion of the insufficiency of these laws. Their Lordships, they add, are not to wonder if a remedy for the evil should come to them from without ("from an alien hand"), seeing that Moses, highly favoured of God as he was, yet received counsel of an idolater touching the government of the Israelites, and that St. Peter had need of the eloquence of Apollos, and of consultation with the rest of the apostolic body.

Then they declare, that, though far from arrogating for themselves, that they are the persons chosen by God to instruct the Council, yet that they are, as it were, the eyes of the court;

that; while their Lordships are spiritually asleep "in the depths of temporal business,"* they (the preachers) are, or as they delicately phrase it, should be, studying the law of God, in order to expound it to the court: and they add significantly, that, if they had done their duty, perhaps there would not have been so much corruption in many things as there is.

They then proceed to the business in hand; and, admitting that the laws which were read to them were excellent laws, provided there was to be such a thing as a *repartimiento*, and provided the laws in question could be executed, which they thought could never be, they come at once to the root of the matter, and pronounce that the cause of all the evil in the Indies is the system of giving the Indians in *repartimiento*. It is contrary, they say, to worldly prudence, to the service of the King, to civil and canonical law, to the rules of moral philosophy and theology, and to the will of God and of His Church.

Against *repartimientos*.

While such a thing exists, they ask, can the evils of those colonies be repaired by any laws that may be made?

They then go into proof upon all the points they have raised against the system of giving Indians in *repartimiento*. Upon the first point, namely, of this practice being contrary to worldly prudence, they adduce the following argument well worthy of attention. This system, they say, prevents the existence of a State, "which, accord-

Which prevent the existence of a State.

* "En el profundo de los temporales negocios."

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ing to all those who have written of it, consists in diversity of conditions and offices." Who ever heard, they ask, of a great digging republic (*republica cavadora*) in which there are no soldiers, philosophers, lawyers, official men, or other kind of labourers than those who dig?

Repartimientos inconsistent with freedom.

They afterwards go into the civil and political branch of the argument, and utterly contravene the notion that this system of *repartimientos* is consistent with freedom. What king, who ever lived, they ask, compelled his people to work more than nine months of the year for him or for others? Upon this branch of the argument they lay much stress, and they say, "We hold (would to God it may not be so) that this most great sin (the system of *repartimientos* or *encomiendas*) will be the cause of the total destruction of the State of Spain, if God does not alter it, or we do not amend it ourselves."

Visitors cannot correct abuses.

The preachers then fairly demolish the supposition that visitors can correct abuses. Why, if these visitors were angels, and neither ate, nor slept, nor received gifts, they would not check abuses which the fears of the Indians themselves would always throw a cloak over; and who are these visitors?—persons looking upon the masters, whose doings they come to inspect, as men, perhaps as friends and benefactors, but upon the Indians as beasts.

The preachers then enter upon most dangerous ground, as we should conceive it, only that there was a great deal more freedom of speech in those days than we are apt to imagine.

They contend that *repartimientos* are an injury to the king because they destroy his title; and they lay down the doctrine, that a king's title depends upon his rendering service to his people, or being chosen by them.* Now the establishment of these *repartimientos* is not a service to the Indian people, and therefore the king has no title to be their sovereign on the ground of service rendered to them: no one can say that the Indians have chosen him for their sovereign; and, therefore, where is the king's title?

Repartimientos destroy the King's title.

Many other arguments against the system of *repartimientos* were brought forward in this protest of the preachers, which need not be recounted here. After summing up, finally, against the system, the preachers proposed their own scheme of government. It was, that the Indians should be formed into settlements consisting of two hundred inhabitants each, and that a Spanish governor should be set over each settlement, whose business it should be to instruct his little community in the peaceful arts of life. He should receive a salary out of the proceeds of the labour of the Indians, but it should be a fixed sum, in order that he might have no inducement of personal interest to overwork the Indians. This governor, or majordomo, for that name would better describe his office, should arrange

Preachers propose their own plan.

* "Resta pues manifiestamente que el derecho y Señorío del Rey Nuestro Señor depende ó del bien y acrecentamiento que procura á aquella república como suena la concesion apostólica, ó de la voluntad de aquellos pueblos." —Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 135.

Plan of the King's preachers.

the times for the Indians to go to the mines. Of the gold that they might get, a fifth part should go to the King; and on the produce that they might raise from their farms and sell there should be an excise. The rest of the gold and the produce should be left in the hands of the majordomo, who should account for it to certain visitors. He should take his salary out of it; and what remained, after providing for the sustenance of the settlement for a year, for tools, and for hammocks, should belong to the Indians, and be spent for them in building cottages, in providing furniture and other useful things: so that in course of time they might learn to have a desire for property, "for this must be the beginning of their polity."

The preachers, speaking of the good to arise from these regulations, say that the Indians will thus become "a noble and civilized race" (*gente noble y politica*), as other people, the Spaniards, the Germans, and the English have become, who, perhaps, were formerly as barbarous, or more so, than these Indians; and who, in former days, as Trogus Pompeius mentions, for want of wine being cultivated by them, drank beer only—a state of things, by the way, which some of them have not yet escaped from.

Emigration.

Emigration, also, they contend will take place from Spain; for many persons who are here superfluous (*que acá sobran*) will take courage to go to the Indies and live there. If they were superfluous, Spain must have been very different from what it is now. It is consolatory, however,

to find that nonsense, or at least very incomplete sense, was talked upon this subject more than three centuries ago.

Lastly, the preachers say, that if their plan be put in action, these Indian islands may become "one of the important things in the world," even as regards temporal interests; whereas, if no remedy is found for them, they will become vast deserts. Then, commending their suggestions to the wisdom of the Council of the Indies, the preachers bring their discourse to an end.

The King's Council receive the preachers' suggestions.

The Council received the paper with courtesy, and even with somewhat of approbation. To me it seems, as it did to Las Casas, that the scheme of the preachers for the regeneration of the Indies laboured under a great, if not a vital objection, in allowing too much work at the mines. But, on the whole, it is a very remarkable state paper; sagacious, humane, and bold.

The Council of the Indies seems by quiet demeanour to have absorbed the opposition of the preachers; and these good men, thinking that they had produced the proper impression upon the minds of the statesmen, left the matter in their hands, considering themselves to have fulfilled their vow. As a body of men acting together, they are no more heard of in this history. Still we must not conclude that their labours and their boldness went for nothing. The river that carries civilization through a country, and creates a metropolis, is fed by many streams whose names and waters are lost in it; and in like manner, many are the unnoticed currents of

Legislation the work of many minds.

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thought and endeavour which go to form the main volume of wise legislation.

Las Casas presses on his own scheme.

The indefatigable Las Casas, having little hope of any good coming from the remonstrance of the preachers, pressed on with vigour his own scheme of colonization. The Bishop of Burgos and the Council of the Indies with equal vigour resisted it. The Clerigo, backed by many of the Flemings, and, as he intimates, having access to the young King and being favourably received by him, took up a position of attack in reference to the Council of the Indies, and inveighed against its proceedings with his usual boldness. The end of this contest was, that the King, with the advice of the Chancellor, appointed a special Council to judge between Las Casas and the Council of the Indies in the matter at issue between them, Las Casas being permitted to name some of the members of this judicial Council. The Bishop of Burgos, when summoned to attend this Council, evaded the summons, pleading indisposition: but, on another occasion, being summoned in general terms to a council, and supposing it to be a council of war, or state, he came readily enough, and was dismayed to find that Indian affairs and the business of Las Casas were the questions to be discussed.

His success.

Being heard before this judicial Council, Las Casas succeeded in carrying his point: it was resolved that the land which he sought for should be conceded to him; and his success went so far that the proper official papers were put in

course of preparation. The Clerigo thought now, that his business at court was really ended. But the Bishop had another arrow in his quiver. Oviedo, the historian, had just come over from the Indies; and he and two others offered to take the land that Las Casas asked for, agreeing to pay a much higher sum to the King. It is curious to look back and see these two men, who were to be the most celebrated historians of the Indies, bidding against each other for the land to found a colony there; but in those days men of letters were men of action, as perhaps they would be in any time, if they were not supposed to be unfitted for it.

New opposition.

The Council, which I have described as the judicial Council, was summoned to hear this new proposition. Las Casas spoke out very boldly before it; and, in the course of the proceedings, Antonio de Fonseca, the brother of the Bishop of Burgos, a man of great authority, thus addressed Las Casas, interrupting him probably in the midst of some statement: "You cannot now say that the members of the Indian Council have been the death of the Indians, for you have taken all their Indians away." He alluded to the order issued by Ximenes, that the Indians should be taken away from absentee proprietors, amongst whom were members of the Council. Las Casas replied, "My Lord, their Lordships have not been the death of all the Indians, but they have been the death of immense numbers where they possessed them: the principal destruction, however, of the Indians has been effected by

Las Casas heard before the Council.

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private persons, which destruction their Lordships have abetted."

The Bishop in a furious manner then broke into the discussion with these words: "A fortunate man, indeed, is he who is of the Council of the King, if, being of the Council of the King, he is to put himself in contest with Casas." To this unmannerly speech the Clerigo replied with much readiness and dignity: "A more fortunate man is Casas, if, having come from the Indies two thousand leagues, encountering such risks and dangers, to advise the King and his Council, in order that they might not lose their souls (*que no se vayan a los Infiernos*) on account of the tyranny and destruction which is going on in the Indies, in place of being thanked and honoured for it, he should have to put himself in contest with the Council."

Las Casas replies to the Bishop of Burgos in Council.

At the end of the proceedings the votes were taken, and were found to be in favour of Las Casas. Still, the Council of the Indies, not likely to be much softened by the way in which he had spoken out before the great Council on this last occasion, continued to make resistance. Here we miss the late Cardinal, who would never have allowed for a day these mean endeavours to undermine a great undertaking. As a new device, the Council of the Indies drew up and presented to the Chancellor a memorial against the proposed grant being made to Las Casas, consisting of thirty articles, most of them of a very absurd character. Amongst them were such allegations as these:—that Las Casas, being

Memorial against Las Casas.

a Clerigo, was not under the King's jurisdiction; and that he would league with the Genoese and Venetians, and make off to foreign countries with plunder. In their last article the Council alleged, that they had many other reasons which were secret, but which they would tell His Highness (for the memorial was addressed to the King), when he should be pleased to hear them.

The memorial was laid before the great Council; and the result was, that the Chancellor, upon coming out of it, said to Las Casas, that he must give an answer to this document. The difficulty then arose of getting the memorial, for the Council of the Indies made frivolous excuses for withholding it. Months were wasted about this trumpery affair, which may give us some notion of the perseverance and endurance of the Protector of the Indians. At last the Chancellor got the memorial into his hands. He then invited Las Casas to dinner, and afterwards, taking out of his escrutoire a large bundle of papers, he said to the Clerigo, "Answer now to these things they say against you." Las Casas replied, that the Council of the Indies had been months preparing this accusation, "and I have to answer them in a *credo*. Give me the papers for as many hours as they had months, and your Lordship shall see that I will answer them." The Chancellor said, that he could not part with the papers, as he had promised he would not let them go out of his possession, but Las Casas might answer them there. So, of an evening, while the Chancellor was at his work, the Clerigo

The Chancellor obtains the memorial.

came, and sat in a corner of the room, and drew up his reply. Chancellors, even in those days, seem to have been greatly overworked; but, indeed, this has always been the case, that the work of the world, of all kinds, gets into knots, as it were; and one man is often left to do the work of six men, who, with infinite dissatisfaction to themselves, are looking on and noting how ill the work is done. At eleven o'clock, a collation was always brought in; at twelve, the Clerigo took his leave, and went home to his *posada*, not without some fear of what might happen to him on the way from such powerful enemies as were ranged against him. In four evenings Las Casas had prepared his reply.

Las Casas replies to the memorial.

The Chancellor then summoned a council, and laid the reply before them. It seems to have been successful, for all the Bishop of Burgos could say against it was, "The preachers of the King have made these answers for him." This, of course, the Chancellor knew to be false. He reported to the King the whole course of the proceedings; and His Highness ordered that Micer Bartolomé should have the grant, and that no notice should be taken of the offers of those who wished to outbid him.

The reader will think that he has now accompanied the Clerigo to a triumphant conclusion of his present business at court; but, before he left, he was destined to have what he calls "a terrible combat;" and, as it will bring the young King into presence, upon whose disposition and knowledge of Indian affairs so much depended,

it will be well to give an account of this combat.

Just at this time it happened that the Bishop of Darien came to court—upon what business will hereafter appear from a statement of his own. The court was still at Barcelona, but, on account of a pestilence that prevailed there, the King was lodged at a place called "Molins de Rey," three leagues from the town; and the great Lords occupied houses in the suburbs. Las Casas, seeing the Bishop of Darien for the first time, in the King's apartments, asked what prelate that was. They told him, "The Bishop of the Indies." Las Casas went up to him, and said "My Lord, as I am concerned in the Indies, it is my duty to kiss the hands of your Lordship." The Bishop asked who it was that addressed him, and, being informed, rudely replied, "O, Señor Casas! and what sermon have you to preach to us?"

Altercation between the Bishop of Darien and Las Casas.

Las Casas, who was never daunted by bishop or councillor, answered at once, "There was a time, my Lord, when I desired to hear you preach" (the Bishop had been King's preacher in former days), "but I now declare to your Lordship, that I have two sermons ready for you, which, if you please to hear and well consider them, may be worth more than all the money that you bring from the Indies." "You have lost your senses; you have lost your senses," said the Bishop. An acquaintance of the Bishop said to his Lordship, "All these Lords approve of Señor Casas, and of his intentions." The Bishop replied,

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"With good intentions he may do a thing which shall be mortal sin." At this moment, when the Clerigo, once engaged in controversy, would doubtless have uttered some severe and angry speech, the doors of the council chamber, where the King was, opened, and the Bishop of Badajoz came out, for whom the other Bishop was waiting, as he was to dine with him.

Now the Bishop of Badajoz,* who was in great credit with the King, had always favoured the Clerigo; and Las Casas, fearing that the Bishop of Darien might injure him with his brother Bishop, resolved to go to his house that day. He went there when the company had finished their dinner, and found the Bishop of Badajoz playing at backgammon (*a las tablas*) with the Admiral Don Diego Columbus, the Bishop recreating himself until it was the hour to return to the King's lodgings again. There was a knot of bystanders looking on at the game, and one of them happened to say to the Bishop of Darien, that wheat was grown in Hispaniola. The

* The Bishop of Badajoz does not come before the reader for the first time at this point of the history. He was the Bernardo de Mesa, one of the King's preachers, who was referred to at the making of the laws of Burgos, and who pronounced a qualified opinion in favour of *encomiendas*. It will be recollected that he thought it would be a great difficulty to teach good customs to the Indians, for, as an insular people (the Terra-firma had not then been discovered), they naturally, he said, have less constancy, "by reason of the moon being the mistress of the waters."—See ante, book 4, chap. 2.

It was afterwards the Bishop's fate to become closely acquainted with another insular people, for he was sent as Ambassador to England, where, as it was in Henry the Eighth's time, his theory about the inconstancy of insular people was probably confirmed.

Bishop said that it was not possible. Now Las Casas happened to have in his purse some grains of wheat which had been grown under an orange tree in the garden of the Dominican Monastery of St. Domingo; and so, after controverting most respectfully the assertion of the Bishop, he produced the wheat. The Bishop replied with fierceness, and then launched into a general attack of the rudest kind upon Las Casas, declaring his unfitness for the business he had come to court upon. Great ecclesiastics have mostly been well-disposed and well-spoken men; but, when there has arisen an insolent one, his ill-breeding has always, I imagine, far outgone that of other men. The fervid Las Casas was not behindhand in the war of words, and told the Bishop that he drank the blood of his own flock, and that unless he returned to the last farthing all the money he had brought over, he was no more likely to be saved than Judas Iscariot. The Bishop endeavoured to laugh down these violent sayings. The Clerigo told him he ought to weep rather than to laugh. At last the Bishop of Badajoz, using the authority of a host, interfered, saying, "No more, no more;" and after the Admiral and another great Lord had said some words in favour of Las Casas, the Clerigo retired.

The Bishop in the wrong.

The Bishop of Badajoz, when he saw the King in the afternoon, told him of what had taken place between the Bishop of Darien and the Clerigo, saying that His Highness would have been amused to hear what Micer Bartolomé said to the Bishop. I have but little doubt that

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there was supposed to be some truth in the hard sayings of the Clerigo. The King resolved to hear what they both had to say, and for that purpose fixed an hour of audience three days from that time. The Admiral of the Indies, as the matter concerned him, was requested to be present; and, as it happened that a Franciscan brother from Hispaniola had just arrived at court, he also was ordered by the King to attend this audience.

The King gives audience to persons concerned in the Indies.

The day came: the King took his seat on the throne, a few of his greatest councillors being ranged around him on benches below. The order of the proceedings was as follows. The Chancellor and the Lord of Croy ascended the *dais* where the King was seated, and on their knees conferred with him and received his commands. Then, when they had returned to their places, the Chancellor gave utterance to these commands:—"Reverend Bishop, His Majesty" (Charles had just been elected Emperor, and was therefore styled Majesty) "commands you to speak, if you have anything to say touching the Indies."

Bishop of Darien's speech.

The Bishop of Darien then rose, and made, as Las Casas admits, an elegant exordium, saying how he had long desired to see that Royal Presence, and that now, God having complied with his desire, he knew that the face of Priam was worthy of his kingdom. Having finished this exordium, the Bishop went on to say, that he had come from the Indies, and had secret matters of much importance to communicate, which had better be

told to His Majesty and the Council only, wherefore he begged that those who were not of the Council, might be ordered to depart. The King desired, through the Chancellor, that the Bishop should say there and then whatever he had to say. Part of the Bishop's speech is so remarkable, that it is better to give that in his own words.

"Very powerful Sir, the Catholic King your grandfather (may he be in glory!) determined to make an armada to go and people the Terra-firma of the Indies, and he begged our very holy Father to create me Bishop of that new settlement; and, not counting the time passed in going and returning, I have been five years there, and, as we were much people and took with us no more provisions than were necessary for the journey, the greatest part died of hunger, and we who remained, in order not to die as those did, have all this time done no other thing than rob and kill and eat. Seeing, then, that the land was going to destruction, and that the first Governor* was bad, and the second† much worse, and that Your Majesty had in a happy hour arrived in these kingdoms, I determined to come and give You intelligence of this, as to my Lord and King." Touching the Indians, the Bishop said, that from what he had seen of them, both in his own diocese, and on his journey, his opinion was that they were by nature slaves.

His opinion of the governors of Darien.

* Vasco Nuñez.

† Pedrarias.

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Speech of Las Casas.

Las Casas was now commanded to speak. It will be needless, however, to recount his speech, as his thoughts on these subjects, and the principal facts which he enumerated, have already been stated in various parts of this narrative. It appears that the Bishop of Darien, in the course of his argument, had quoted Plato, to which the Clerigo, I am sorry to say, made this reply: "Plato was a Gentile, and is now burning in Hell, and we are only to make use of his doctrine as far as it is consistent with our holy Faith and Christian customs."

Though the speech of the Clerigo need not be reported in full, one declaration that he made must not be omitted, in which he told the King, that he had not taken up his vocation to please him, but to please God, and in proof of this bold assertion, went on to say, "I renounce whatever temporal honour or reward Your Majesty may wish to confer upon me."*

Speech of a Franciscan monk.

Las Casas having finished, the Franciscan Father was ordered to speak. "My Lord," he said, "I have been certain years in the island of Hispaniola, and I was commanded with others to go and visit and take the number of Indians in

* Indeed, he went so far as to say that, with all respect for so great a King, he would not go from where he stood to the corner of the room, merely to serve His Majesty, unless it were to perform his duty as a subject, and unless he thought that it were consistent with the will of God to do so.—"Es cierto (hablando con todo acatamiento y reverencia que se deve á tan alto Rey é Señor) que de aquí á aquel rincon no me mudaré por servir á Vuestra Magestad, salva la fidelidad que como subdito devo, sino pensase y creyese hacer á Dios en ello gran sacrificio."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 148.

the island, and we found that they were so many thousand. Afterwards, at the end of two years, a similar charge was again given to me, and we found that there had perished so many thousand. And thus the infinity of people who were in that island has been destroyed. Now, if the blood of one person unjustly put to death was of such effect that it was not removed out of the sight of God until he had taken vengeance for it, and the blood of the others never ceases to exclaim '*Vindica sanguinem nostrum, Deus noster*,' what will the blood do of such innumerable people as have perished in those lands under such great tyranny and injustice? Then, by the blood of Jesus Christ and by the wounds* of St. Francis, I pray and entreat Your Majesty, that you would find a remedy for such wickedness and such destruction of people, as perish daily there, so that the divine justice may not pour out its severe indignation upon all of us."

It was a short speech, but uttered with such fervour, that it seemed to Las Casas as if all the persons there present were already listening to words pronounced in the Day of Judgment.

Speech of the Admiral of the Indies.

The Admiral was then requested to speak. He spoke prudently, acknowledging the evils, bearing witness as to what the *religiosos* had done in denouncing these evils, and praying also on his part for a remedy.

Upon the Admiral's ceasing to speak, the

* The *stigmata*.

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Bishop of Darien asked for leave to reply, but he was desired to deliver in writing what more he had to say. The King then rose, and retired into his room, and the audience was ended. It may be hoped that the young Emperor, who, we are told, was unmoved by his new title,* but who had now begun to reign for himself,† found much to ponder over, from this his first audience in the affairs of the Indies.

Audience ended.

Bishop of Darien gives his opinion in writing.

It may be as well to mention here, that the Bishop of Darien did submit his information and his opinions about the Indies in writing, that his memorials were very much in accordance with the statements that Las Casas had already made, and that the Bishop, when asked his opinion respecting the Clerigo's plan, approved of it, to the great delight, as Las Casas tells us, of the Chancellor and Laxao, as men who loved to favour a good design, and had no mean ends of their own. It may be remarked that Peter Martyr, who is always sufficiently severe upon the Flemings, finds much to praise in this Chancellor.

Jeronimites.

At this time the Jeronimite Fathers came to court, on their return from Hispaniola; but, not being able to obtain an audience of the King, they retired to their monasteries, and, I believe,

* "Rex, jam Cæsar, quicquid in humanis præstare fortuna potest visus est nihili facere. Tanta est ejus gravitas et animi magnitudo, ut habere sub pedibus universum præ se ferre videatur."—Peter Martyr, *Epist.*, 648.

† "Porque, como el Rey comenzaba entonces á reinar, eran frecuentes los consejos."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 147.

were no more heard of in the government of the Indies.

The King went to Coruña, in order to embark there, and to proceed to Germany for the purpose of being made Emperor with the due formalities. Some of the Spaniards looked upon the election of Charles to the Empire as no gain to them, and said, that under the fine name of Empire, the fate of Spain would be that of a wretched province.* "What is the Emperor's title" writes PETER MARTYR to Charles's Chancellor, "but the shade of the highest tree." If the Indians could have been consulted in the matter, they would have found much more to regret in it than the Spaniards did; and they might well have likened the shadow of this tree to that of the deadly upas. For the fate of a colony under a preoccupied government at home is in some respects worse even than when it is under a feeble government.

However, at this particular moment, the Indians have not much to complain of, as the last seven days before the King embarked were given to the business of the Indies. In one of the Councils held on this occasion, the Cardinal Adrian (the former colleague of Ximenes) made a great speech in favour of the liberty of the Indians; and it was resolved that they ought to be free, and should be treated as free men. The grant to Las Casas was also concluded, and the

The grant to Las Casas.

* "Hispaniam, inquiunt, quæ libera erat et suis fruebatur prærogativis, sub titulis Imperialibus in provincialem calamitatem esse vertendam."—PETER MARTYR, *Epist.*, 661.

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The King embarks.

King signed the necessary deed on the 19th of May, 1520. On the 20th* he embarked for Flanders. It was during this voyage that he landed at Dover; and his object in making this visit was to prevent, if possible, the injury which he, or his councillors, foresaw might arise to his affairs from the impending meeting of the Kings of France and England at the Field of the Cloth of Gold.† Cardinal Adrian was nominated as Regent of Spain during the King's absence.

Bishop of Burgos favours the Clerigo.

In the settlement of the details of the Clerigo's business, he was left to the mercy of the Bishop of Burgos, and a most formidable opposition might in consequence have been expected; but, strange to say, the Bishop facilitated the settlement of the affair,‡ thus showing himself to have some nobleness of mind, for, the King and the Flemish ministers having departed, Las Casas was but a shadow of his former self. The Clerigo, too, meeting his old adversary's relentings with equal generosity, expresses a hope (though mingled with great fear about the result) that *all* the mischief the Bishop had been the cause of in

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* See Vandenesse's *Itinerary of the Emperor Charles V.*

† "Cursores habemus. Rex Angliæ vires suas offert Cæsari, se comitaturum eum ad Coronam, si opus fuerit, licet ex Galli Regis rogatu annuerit Anglus colloquium in utriusque finibus, apud Calesium oppidum. Qui conventus Cæsareis est suspectissimus. Verentur ne quid detrimenti rebus Cæsareis offerat illa conjunctio, si prius acciderit quam Cæsar Anglum alloquatur."—Peter Martyr, *Epist.*, 669.

‡ "Trató muy bien, despues de partido el Rey, á el Clérigo el Obispo, no mirando los enojos que dado se habia, en lo qual mostró ser generoso y de noble ánimo, como el Clérigo quedase sin favor alguno despues del Rey ido y todos los Flamencos, que hacian por él y por la verdad que estimaban que traia."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Ind.*, MS., l. 3, c. 154.

the Indies might not come upon his soul; and Las Casas finds some excuse for the Bishop in his not having been a learned man, but having followed the ignorance of the learned. Each must have felt for the other as one of the chiefs in Ossian, who says, "I love a foe like Cathmor: his soul is great; his arm is strong; there is fame in his battles. But the little soul is like a vapour that hovers round a marshy lake. It never rises on the green-hill, lest the winds meet it there."

The Clerigo's purpose unchanged.

We must not suppose that, absorbed in all these secular negociations, the Clerigo had changed the main drift of his purpose. That was still spiritual, or, at the lowest, philanthropic, as we may gather from a remarkable answer which he made at an early stage of the proceedings to a certain licentiate, called Aguirre, a very good man, of great authority in those times, whom Queen Isabella had chosen for one of her executors. This man had always loved and favoured Las Casas, but when he found that the Clerigo was pursuing an enterprize in which Aguirre heard of rents being paid to the King, and of honours being sought for by Las Casas on behalf of his companions, the licentiate said "that such a manner of proceeding in preaching the gospel had scandalized him, for it evinced an aiming after temporal interests, which he had never hitherto suspected in the Clerigo."*

* "Dijo que le habia desedificado aquella manera de proceder en la predicacion Evangelica, porque mostraba pretender temporal

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Las Casas, having heard what Aguirre had said, took occasion to speak to him one day in the following terms: "Señor, if you were to see our Lord Jesus Christ maltreated, vituperated, and afflicted, would you not implore with all your might that those who had him in their power would give him to you, that you might serve and worship him?" "Yes," said Aguirre. "Then," replied Las Casas, "if they would not give him to you, but would sell him, would you redeem him?" "Without a doubt." "Well, then, Señor," rejoined Las Casas, "that is what I have done, for I have left in the Indies Jesus Christ, our Lord, suffering stripes, and afflictions, and crucifixion, not once but thousands of times, at the hands of the Spaniards, who destroy and desolate those Indian nations, taking from them the opportunity of conversion and penitence, so that they die without faith and without sacraments."

His reply to the licentiate Aguirre.

Then Las Casas went on to explain how he had sought to remedy these things in the way that Aguirre would most have approved. To this the answer had been, that the King would have no rents, wherefore, when he, Las Casas, saw that his opponents would sell him the gospel, he had offered those temporal inducements which Aguirre had heard of and disapproved.

The licentiate considered this a sufficient answer, and so, I think, would any reasonable man.

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interese, lo que nunca hasta entonces habia sospechado de él."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 137.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEARL COAST AND ITS INHABITANTS.

HISTORY seems often to be only a record of great opportunities missed or mismanaged. Amidst the tumult of small things which require immediate attention, and which press at least fully as much upon persons in great place as upon private individuals, the most important transactions are not appreciated in their true proportions. Besides—and this is the fatal circumstance—when great affairs are in their infancy, and are most tractable to human endeavour, they then appear of the smallest importance; and all consideration about them is lost in attending to the full-blown events of the current day, which, however, are rapidly losing their significance.

Thus it fared with the plan of Las Casas, which had now been brought, by almost incredible efforts on his part, to the first landing-place of success. No person—neither king, courtier, nor ecclesiastic—appreciated the magnitude of the transaction. The King and his court were hurrying off to Germany. The Council of the Indies, which had never been friendly to Las Casas, probably looked upon his plan as little differing from the schemes they were daily con-

No one perceived the greatness of the enterprize.

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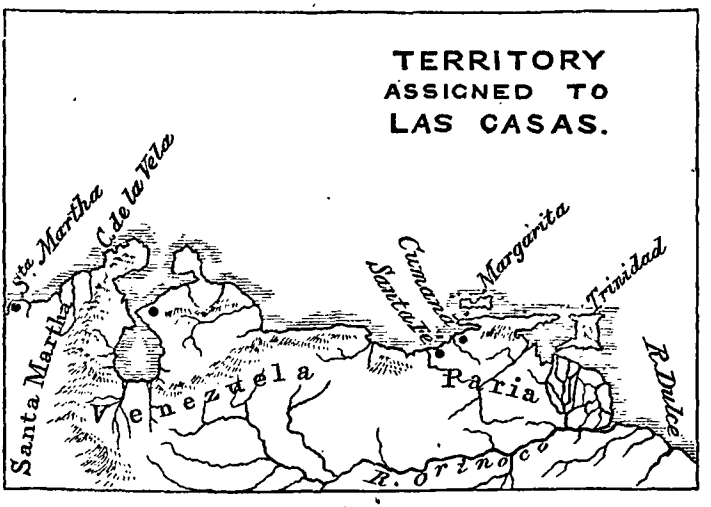
sidering, and were no doubt glad to get rid of one who had proved a constant thorn in their sides. The friendly Flemings did not think of supplying Las Casas with funds before they left: his own had long been exhausted in this laborious suit; and, if he had not been enabled to borrow some money at Seville, the expedition must have fallen to the ground from sheer want of means to initiate it.

This would have been the more to be regretted, as Las Casas had succeeded in obtaining



an extent of territory large enough for the most ample experiment of colonization. It reached from the province of Paria to that of Santa Martha, about two hundred and sixty leagues along the coast, and was to extend right through the country to the Pacific, a distance of two thousand five hundred leagues, and so it seems would have included the country lying immediately north-

Territory assigned to Las Casas.

wards of Peru, and some part of Peru itself.* If Las Casas had been a rich and powerful man, or had been well supported by the rich and powerful, he might easily have altered the fate of South America.

Las Casas ready for his enterprize.

The narrative, after many turnings and windings, in the difficult navigation of affairs at court, has now come to that point, where Las Casas, having conquered his troubles in Spain, was ready to start for the Terra-firma, tolerably well equipped with all the things that were necessary for a great enterprize of colonization in that part of the world. It remains to be seen how far the Terra-firma was ready to receive him; and whether there would be that concurrence of favourable circumstances, upon which success in any enterprize depends, or at least without which success is in the highest degree difficult. For this purpose, it is necessary for the writer to go back a long way in the history of the Indies, to resuscitate Columbus, who had now for many years found the true rest of the tomb, and to describe, at some length, the discovery and settlement of that part of the Terra-firma which

Past history of the Terra-firma must be told.

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* "Se le encomendava desde la Provincia de Pária inclusive, hasta la de Santa Marta exclusive, que son de costa de Mar Leste oueste doscientas y sesenta leguas poco mas ó menos, y ambos á dos límites corriendo por cuerda derecha hasta dar á la otra costa del Sur, ó mediodía, que son (como despues ha parecido) mas de dos mill y quinientas leguas por la tierra dentro, porque no hay otra mar hasta el estrecho de Magallanes." — Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 154.

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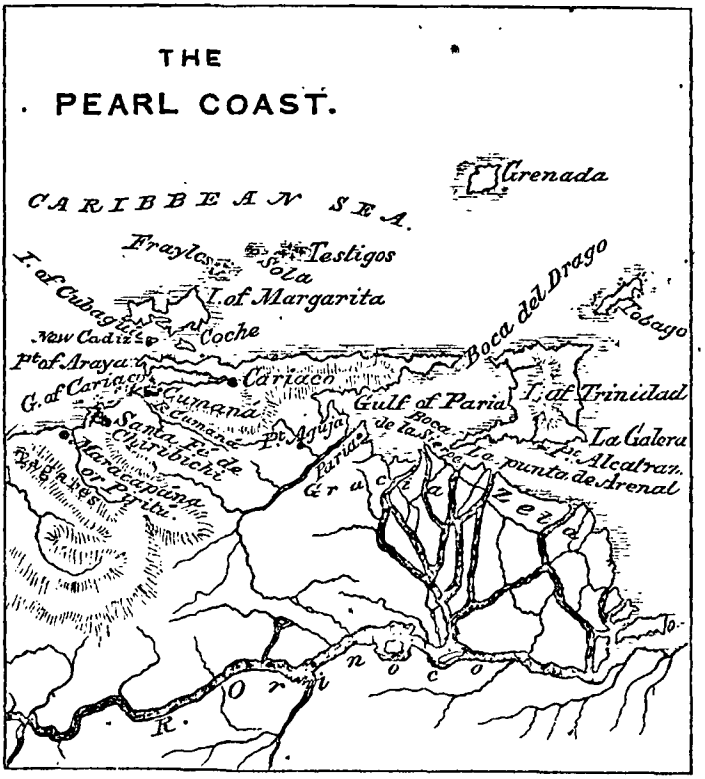
had been granted by the King of Spain to the Clerigo, Las Casas.

Nay, further, to bring the subject with anything like completeness before the mind of the reader, it will be advisable to anticipate the Spanish Conquest, and to make some endeavour,



Natives of the Pearl Coast.

at least, to describe the inhabitants of the coast of Cumaná (otherwise called the Pearl Coast), and their mode of life, before they had seen the face of a white man. Hitherto, in the course of this narrative, when the word "Indians" has occurred, it has conveyed little more information than if

the words "savages," "aborigines," or "copper-coloured men," had been used. And, indeed, so much is our knowledge of different tribes intermingled and confused, that it would be presumptuous to say with respect to any account given, even after the utmost research, of the inhabitants of any particular part of the coast, that it was exactly faithful. Still, some attempt must be made; and, as there was a general resemblance in the languages spoken by the adjacent tribes, even though they could not understand each other,* so in the life of these several tribes there was a general basis of accordance, which we must endeavour to bring before our minds, if we would take the full interest in their story, which its importance to the world demands for it.

The traveller of modern days sees these various tribes under a very different aspect from that which they must have presented to the Spanish conquerors, and especially from that which they would have presented to any thoughtful and scientific explorer who had accompanied or preceded those conquerors. The stagnant life of the Indian in the Missions—the suppressed life of the Indian under the civil rule of another race, essentially different from his own—will give but little idea of what that life was, before the Indians had seen any

The Indians of former days.

* "The Cumanagotos, the Tamanacs, the Chaymas, the Guaraons, and the Caribbees, do not understand each other, in spite of the frequent analogy of words and of grammatical structure exhibited in their respective idioms." — Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. I, chap. 9.

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vessels other than their own swift *piraguas* hollowed from the trunks of trees.

Even the laws which were meant to be most considerate for the Indians, and which were obtained with such difficulty by benevolent churchmen like Las Casas, or kind-hearted statesmen like Charles the Fifth, have proved a sad restraint upon the energies of the race, as no man leans long on any person, or thing, without losing some of his own original power and energy. It was ordained, for instance, that no Indian should have any transaction of buying or selling which involved a sum greater than a certain small specified amount. This law was passed to protect the Indian: the modern traveller naturally and justly sees in it an instance of the childlike subjection under which the Indians have been kept. No wonder that he observes in going into their huts, that he can discern little or no difference between the countenances of the father and the son,* so few and so flaccid have been the emo-

Indians of this day.

* "All the Chaymas have a sort of family look; and this resemblance, so often observed by travellers, is the more striking, as between the ages of twenty and fifty, difference of years is no way denoted by wrinkles of the skin, colour of the hair, or decrepitude of the body. On entering a hut, it is often difficult among adult persons to distinguish the father from the son, and not to confound one generation with another. I attribute this air of family resemblance to two different causes, the local situation of the Indian tribes, and their inferior degree of intellectual culture."—Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. I, chapter 9.

See also the account of the missionary Gumilla: "El cabello en todos sin excepcion alguna es negro, grueso, laso y largo, con el apreciable privilegio, que necesita de largo peso de años para ponerse canos: argumento nuevo que robora la opinion antigua de que las canas son parto mas le-

tions that have passed through the mind, and impressed themselves upon that unerring indicator, the visage, even in the Indian whose time of life is such, that had he been a man of different race and country, the cruel wrinkles would have been in abundance, like the lines in a map, telling no slight portion of his troubled history.

Indians of the Pearl Coast.

From all that I have been able to learn of the Indians on the coast of Cumaná, at the period preceding the Spanish Conquest, I should certainly not be inclined to class them under the head of savage tribes. They had ceased to be nomadic. They lived in villages. They were expert fishermen. And here it may be noticed, that the sea performs the same function in civilizing men that the settlement and cultivation of lands do, giving them a fixed place of work and a settled occupation. These Indians were skilful in hunting, but were not hunters only, for they had domestic animals, which the women tended. An immense love for the solitude of nature,* the reminiscence perhaps of an earlier state, beset them; and, no doubt, they enjoyed their indolent

Their occupation.

Love of solitude.

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gítimo de las pesadumbres y cuidados que de los muchos años. Ello es así, que no creo se hallen gentes que disimulen tanto la edad, y la demuestren ménos que los Indios, cuyas canas apénas comienzan á pintar á los sesenta años."—*Historia Natural, Civil y Geográfica de las Naciones del Orinoco*, vol. 1, cap. 5.

* "The irresistible desire the Indians have to flee from society, and enter again on a nomadic life, causes even young children sometimes to leave their parents, and wander four or five days in the forests, living on fruits, palm-cabbage and roots. When travelling in the Missions, it is not uncommon to find whole villages almost deserted, because the inhabitants are in their gardens, or in the forests (al monte)."—Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. 1, chap. 9.

Book IX. Ch. 3.

thoughts in their bewildering tropical forests, free from the imperfect sympathy of other men. They knew how to barter; and all the sagacity that comes from bartering was theirs. Their arithmetic certainly was limited, or would appear so to a European, proceeding by those natural divisions of fives, tens, and twenties, which correspond with fingers and toes. They had not only the various vessels requisite for domestic purposes, but also works of art, imitations of the animal nature around them. Their dress was scanty, but what there was of it, was beautiful and useful; and civilized nations, at least in modern times, have so little to say for themselves in the matter of dress, that perhaps it would be better to omit any comparisons on this head, and to allow that we are more savage than those whom we call savages, only that they perform upon their skins the follies which we display in our dress. One ornament these Indians wore—a fatal ornament for them—namely, strings of pearls.

Their arithmetic.

Works of art and dress.

Their languages were forcible and well-constructed. With equal vigour and courtesy they pointed out the object* first in their sentences, reminding us in this respect of the Latin tongue. The wife, welcoming her husband from the forest, would exclaim, "Thee with joy beholding am I;" the husband, speaking of his victories, would say, "Enemies many conquered have I." It was a language, as the philologists would say, of "agglutination," not, I believe, the highest form of

Their languages.

* See Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. 1, chap. 9.

language, but still full of picturesque beauty. Their mode of reckoning years was by the principal events in them. They spoke of "so many rains," as so many seasons.

We know little of their intellectual development,* of whether they could discourse well, and what they had to discourse about; but we know that now-a-days an Indian in authority will harangue the people of his *pueblo* for hours, apportioning their duties to them, apparently with all due eloquence.† I conceive from their general intelligence they must have had such things as proverbs drawn from their own simple habits, or from those of the animals around them —such proverbs as have been found even in the Bight of Benin,‡ amongst a people certainly in

Love of rhetoric, and faculty for it.

* The conquerors, coming to a new country, wrote of the plants, the trees, and the animals,—specimens of which remain; but few have recorded anything which serves to disclose the thoughts of the new races of men they saw,—and these, for the most part, have perished or are greatly changed. If a Spaniard had made a friend of any Indian, we might have known whether they loved as we love, wherein lay their melancholy (if they were advanced enough to be melancholy), and how the great problems of life pressed upon them.

† "I have often wondered at the volubility with which, at Caripe, the native alcalde, the governador, and the sargento mayor, will harangue for whole hours the Indians assembled before the church; regulating the labours of the week, reprimanding the idle, or threatening the disobedient." — Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. 1, chap. 9.

Las Casas makes a similar remark of some Indians in Central America:—

"Esta era cosa maravillosa, ser tan amigos de no hacer cosa sin mucho acuerdo y consejo: que las mínimas y de muy poca entidad y sustancia, sin primero tractar, y conferir de ellas, por ninguna manera osavan y de esto podria yo decir aver visto algo."— Las Casas, *Hist. Apolog.*, c. 237.

‡ "Äya seju ommo re kiwobò ó. 'The monkey winked its eye (very quickly, but not before) its young one thrust its finger into it:' *i. e.*, rapid as is the wink of the monkey's eye, it may be anticipated by the quicker motion

no respect superior to the Indians. Their mirth would be small, and of a poor kind, for it is civilization, with its odd contrasts and sly irony of situation, putting the fool where the wise man should be, the buffoon where the scholar, the soldier where the bishop,* that gives so much animation and drollery to life, and, indeed, renders it tolerable to the humorist by making it so fantastical and absurd.

Molested by Caribs.

One bitter drop in the cup of ease and comfort which these Indians would otherwise have quaffed so leisurely, was to be found in that strange marauding race, the Caribs; and yet, in the molestation of those Caribs lay the germs of a possible civilization for the quiet and peaceable tribes. These Caribs probably compelled the Chaymas to live in villages for self-defence. They made the science of war a thing necessary to be learnt.† They rendered negociation needful. In short, they were the external element which performed the part that the restless Normans acted in

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of the young one's finger: (an exhortation to be expeditious in one's actions). Omi li ó dàno, akèregbe kò fò.—'It is only the water that is spilt; the calabash is not broken:' *i. e.*, though failure attended the first attempt, yet whilst there is means, another may be made with success."—Crowther's *Yoruba Vocabulary*, Additional Proverbs, pp. 290, 291.

* For instance, how humorous are the allusions constantly made by Las Casas to the warlike propensities of the Bishop of Burgos.

† I cannot help concluding—and it is from very small circumstances that we can learn anything of these obscure tribes—that the fact of the word for fire being the same in the Caribbee and the Chayma language (in Chayma, *apoto:* in Tamanac, *uapto;* in Caribbean *uato*) is significant of a transaction which had often occurred of the burning of peaceful Chayma villages by these indomitable Caribs.

Europe, and their unwelcome presence might have led to similar great results.

Before concluding this very imperfect, and yet very difficult sketch of the Indians of the Pearl Coast and its vicinity, I must mention two things which mark some civilization in the particular spots where they occur. One is, that they had seats to sit upon,* and the other, that they knew that they were indolent and that this was an offence before the gods. This latter fact will appear from their religion, which I reserve for a more general description of the religions of America.

Means of life abundant.

The physical circumstances surrounding these Indians were very favourable. Animal life was abundant. Cereals, or productions which took the place of cereals, were easily obtained; and, as we shall soon see, regular tillage† was found amongst them. Above all, a vast fishing bank ‡

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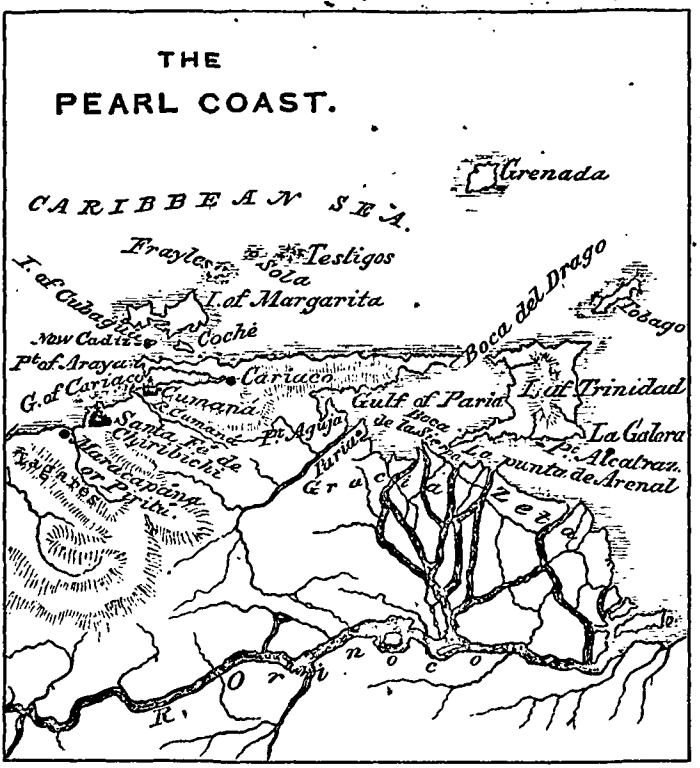
* "Los (la gente nuestra) llevaron á una casa muy grande hecha á dos aguas, y no redonda, como tienda de campo, como son estas otras, y allí tenian muchas sillas á donde los ficieron asentar, y otras donde ellos se asentaron." —*Tercer Viage de Colon.*—Nav. *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 251.

† "In the forests of South America there are tribes of natives, peacefully united in villages, and who render obedience to chiefs. They cultivate the plantain-tree, cassava, and cotton, on a tolerably extensive tract of ground, and they employ the cotton for weaving hammocks. These people are scarcely more barbarous than the naked Indians of the missions, who have been taught to make the sign of the cross. It is a common error in Europe, to look on all natives not reduced to a state of subjection, as wanderers and hunters. Agriculture was practised on the American continent long before the arrival of Europeans."—Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. 1, chap. 9.

‡ "The *Guaiqueries*, or Guai-

Book IX. Ch. 3. near the island of Margarita exercised their skill as fishermen.



Any large extent of history contains such ludicrous and deplorable incidents, that it would hardly be a thing to be wondered at, if all writers of history were to become cynical or

keri, are the most able and most intrepid fishermen of these countries. These people alone are well acquainted with the bank abounding with fish which surrounds the islands of Coche, Margarita, Sola, and Testigos; a bank of more than four hundred square leagues, extending east and west from Maniquarez to the Boca del Draco."—Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. 1, chap. 9.

sarcastic men. The history of this coast is not without such incidents. It was, at the time I have depicted it, namely before the Conquest, a happy, smiling coast, vexed occasionally by Caribs, but otherwise, a bright spot on the earth, where men, without making much pretence to anything that is elevated in human nature, lived peaceably and pleasantly enough, under the shade of their own cocoa trees, looking out upon some of the grandest aspects of nature. If they thought at all about the matter, they must have been delighted with the rich supplies of food which they obtained so easily from their oyster-beds. But the diseases of a creature, apparently occupying a low place in the scale of creation, were fated to be the means of dissolving the whole of Indian society in these parts, and of reducing large districts from a state of cultivation into a state of nature, so that it is only conjectured now by the skilful naturalist, founding his conjecture upon the prevalence of some particular flower, that they once were cultivated.

The mischief of pearls.

It is strange that this little glistening bead, the pearl, should have been the cause of so much movement in the world as it has been. There must be something essentially beautiful in it, however, for it has been dear to the eyes both of civilized and of uncivilized people. The dark-haired* Roman lady, in the palmiest days of Rome, cognizant of all the beautiful productions

Their beauty.

* I have great doubts whether these ornaments would ever have been admired so much, or sought for so eagerly, if a fair-haired people had been the first to set the fashions of the world.

in the world, valued the pearl as highly as ever did the simple Indian woman; and a love for these glistening beads came upon the Spaniards from two* quarters—from the Romans who had colonized them, and from the Moors they had conquered. So general, indeed, was the love for pearls, that it was to be expected that whatever country in the wide circuit of the whole world was cursed with an abundance of pearl-producing oysters, would be sure, when the fact was discovered, to become a theatre for displaying the rapacity of the rest of mankind.

The perilous nature, however, of his submarine possessions was not yet visible to the poor innocent Indian on the coast of Paria or Cumaná; and it was with childish delight that he threw the strings of pearls (strung in a way that would have driven the jewellers of Europe wild with vexation) on the smooth brown arm, or rich brown neck of his beloved.

Without entering into any of the old controversies respecting the comparative felicity of civilized and savage life, it must be admitted that the life, as above described, of the Indians on the north-eastern coast of South America, was

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* "Pearls were the more sought after, as the luxury of Asia had been introduced into Europe by two ways diametrically opposite: that of Constantinople, where the Palæologi wore garments covered with strings of pearls; and that of Granada, the residence of the Moorish kings, who displayed at their court all the luxury of the East."—Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. 1, chap. 5.

not such as to give humanity any cause to be ashamed of it; and, moreover, that it contained a promise of better things which might be developed. It was a society which no benevolent and thinking man would have taken upon himself the responsibility of destroying. People of what is called advanced civilization have not made so noble and bright a thing of life, as to entitle them to be very censorious upon the ruder attempts of others. If we may describe the life of the most civilized nations by an allusion to their modes of representing it upon the stage, we are compelled to confess, that it has not hitherto been dignified enough for a tragedy, not graceful enough for a comedy, and certainly not merry enough for a farce. Such, at least, is the way in which a sarcastic advocate for the uncivilized communities would argue.

An advocate for uncivilized communities.

Moreover, he would contend, that, in this said civilization, men are crowded together without preparation for being in such close contact; and that hence arises a squalidity and a sordidness of life, which were unknown to these Indians we have been describing.* Again, in civilized communities, most men have become portions of a great machine, performing their small part but too well, and mostly unconscious of the drift and

* It is curious that the early discoverers and conquerors seldom or never speak of any absence of cleanliness in the Indian huts or villages, and it seems to have been reserved for the temples of the Indians to manifest that filth and squalor which belong to such considerable portions of the great cities of the civilized world.

meaning of the great machine itself. The people live amidst great things (which is not without its advantage to the mind), but often they understand them not; whereas the semi-civilized man—savage as we call him—does fully comprehend the processes of work around him. In all comparisions between the two states, therefore, this point—namely, how much the average man understands of the state of things around him—is to be considered.

It is a very fitting opportunity to enter upon such considerations, when, as in the narrative of the discovery of the New World, great masses of civilized and uncivilized men are to be brought together in the sternest contact and contrast. Would that such self-humbling thoughts had often been present to the men from the Old World, borne up as they were upon the intelligence and valour of the few men in each generation who had done or thought any new thing, but not in themselves so far superior to the men of the New World whom they came to conquer, as to warrant any outrageous contempt for them.

The impending change of scene for the Indians of the Pearl Coast is something awful to contemplate, a change greater than anything but death. We often picture to ourselves the wild and wondrous feelings of the men from Europe, who came and discovered these new lands; but we hardly can bring home to our minds the amazement which the men of the New World

experienced in beholding their strange visitors, or the dismay with which they must have regarded the destruction of all that they loved, honoured, and venerated. It was what an earthquake is to the man who feels it for the first time, or, from its continuousness, more like the incursion of barbarians amongst a people who had never read or heard of barbarians. And it was natural that they should ask, as they did, whether these destroying creatures had descended from the air, or risen (as the ancients fabled of Venus) from the foam of the sea.*

Amazement of the men of the New World at their visitors.

The above gives some faint outline of what men did and felt in that part of South America called the Pearl Coast, before the appearance of Columbus. To carry on the story for twenty-three years to the point of the Clerigo's arrival, it will still be necessary to describe the way in which Columbus continued to lift, as it were, the veil between the Old and the New Continent, and also to give some account of the occupation of the Pearl Coast by those who availed themselves of the great Admiral's discoveries, up to the very point of time when Las Casas, having overcome his difficulties at court, had been entrusted with the government of a vast territory, stretching from Paria to Santa Martha.

The story of Columbus comes in again.

Perhaps in all histories, and certainly in one

* *Viracocha*, (foam of the sea) was the name given by the Peruvians to the Spaniards.

Reasons for studying the details connected with the Pearl Coast.

so fragmentary, and where portions of the story resemble one another so much, as that of the conquest and colonization of America, it is worth while, occasionally, to go through the most exhaustive process in accumulating and discussing details, in order to attain that mastery over some one section of the subject, which, when thus mastered, will be a key to similar sections of the history, and render it needless to keep in mind, or bring prominently forward, similar classes of details. A story may often be better told, and assuredly better remembered, if it be enriched, and light be thrown into it, by certain sections being well studied and carefully worked out, even though in other parts it is rather vague or succinct, than by an equable narrative which everywhere gives many facts, but nowhere goes into profound detail. Another reason, also, for dwelling carefully, I had almost said painfully, upon some portions of a story, giving all the details that can be found, is, that such a mode of treatment leaves to other minds some opportunity of seeing a new significance in these details, which had escaped the original composer of the narrative, and which it would have been much more difficult to deduce from a level narrative of the kind I have alluded to.

It would have been easy in the present case, simply to state that Columbus discovered Paria, to assume that there was no difference worth recording between the Indians of the Pearl Coast and others who have already been described, and then to give an outline of the occupation by the

Spaniards of this coast and of the adjacent island of Cubagua, in the brief manner that Cæsar might have narrated a victory. But no wisdom is to be gained from such a meagre narrative, unless it can be interpreted by a full one of a similar nature; and it would be doing injustice to the great attempt of Las Casas, to omit illustrating it by the details which for its sake so well deserve to be recorded, and some of which must have been within his knowledge at the time he formed his noble project.

A meagre history unproductive.

CHAPTER IV.

DISCOVERY OF THE CONTINENT BY COLUMBUS, AND OTHER RETROSPECTIVE HISTORY CONNECTED WITH THE PEARL COAST.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

A GOOD starting-point for that important part of the narrative which comes next—namely, the discovery of the American continent by Columbus—will be a recital of the first clause in the instructions given by Ferdinand and Isabella to the Admiral, in the year 1497, previously to his undertaking his third voyage—a voyage which, though not to be compared to his first one, is still very memorable, on account of the discoveries he made, and the sufferings he experienced in the course of it.

Instructions to Columbus by Los Reyes.

The first clause of the instructions is to the effect, that the Indians of the islands are to be brought into peace and quietude, being reduced into subjection "benignantly;" and also, as the principal end of the conquest, that they be converted to the sacred Catholic Faith, and have the holy Sacraments administered to them.*

* "Que nos hayan de servir y estar so nuestro Señorío é Subgeccion benignamente, principalmente que se conviertan á Nuestra Santa Feé Católica; y que á ellos y á los que han de ir á estas Tierras en las dichas Indias sean administrados los Santos Sacramentos por los Religiosos y Clérigos que allá estan y fuesen,

It will be needless to recount the vexations of that "much-enduring man," Columbus, before his embarkation. Suffice it to say, that he set sail from the port of San Lucar on the 30th of May, 1498, with six vessels, and two hundred men, in addition to the sailors that were necessary to navigate the vessels. In the course of his voyage he was obliged to avoid a French squadron which was cruizing in those seas, as France and Spain were then at war. From Gomara, one of the Canary islands, he dispatched three of his ships directly to Hispaniola, declaring in his instructions to their commanders, that he was going to the Cape Verde islands, and thence, "in the name of the Sacred Trinity," to navigate to the south of those islands, until he should arrive under the equinoxial line, in the hope of being guided by God to discover something which may be to His service, and to that of our Lords, the King and Queen, and to the honour of Christendom; "for, I believe," he adds, "that no one has ever traversed this way, and that this sea is nearly unknown."*

Columbus sets sail, May, 1498.

Sends part of the squadron to Hispaniola.

With one ship, therefore, and two caravels, the great Admiral made for the Cape Verde islands, "a false name," as he observes, for nothing was to be seen there of a green colour. He reached these islands on the 27th of June,

He goes to Cape Verde islands.

por manera que dicho Nuestro Señor sea servido y sus conciencias se seguren."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 126.

* "Creo que este camino jamas lo haya hecho nadie, y sea esta Mar muy incógnita."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 130.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

and quitted them on the 4th of July, having been in the midst of such a dense fog all the time, that, he says, "it might have been cut with a knife." Thence he proceeded to the south-west, intending afterwards to take a westerly direction. When he had gone, as he says, one hundred and twenty leagues, he began to find those floating fields of sea-weed which he had encountered in his first voyage. Here he took an observation at night-fall, and found that the north star was in five degrees.* The wind suddenly abated, and

Observation of the Polar star.

* I do not venture to give an explanation of his meaning in this passage: the exact words are "adonde en anocheciendo tenia la estrella del norte en cinco grados."—See NAVARRETE, *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 246.

As it would be desirable, however, not only for the history of navigation, but even for the purposes of present science, to understand the observations taken by Columbus in this memorable voyage, I shall point out one or two of the difficulties, leaving it for those persons who have studied the instruments and the modes of observation in use at the latter end of the fifteenth century, to remove, if possible, these difficulties.

It is said by those who have studied the route of Columbus in this voyage that he never went below the eighth degree of latitude.

Now if we may infer from the words "the north star was in five degrees" that Columbus, aware of the fact that the altitude of the pole equals the latitude of the place, was taking the latitude, and found it to be 5°—this, though a great error, would not be an inadmissible one. A combination of bad instruments and bad methods, in the hands of a bad observer, might give an error of two or three degrees. There is, however, a curious statement of NAVARRETE'S, that Columbus's instruments gave double altitudes, which would increase the difficulty. I must leave this part of the question to astronomers. NAVARRETE'S words are,—"Los cuadrantes de aquel tiempo median la doble altura; y por consiguiente los 42° que dice distaba de la equinoccial hácia el N. deben reducirse á 21° de latitud N., que es con corta diferencia el parelelo por donde navegaba Colon."—NAV. *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 44, n.

Again, from other passages it appears that Columbus, in the course of this voyage, was taking the polar distance of the north star, upon which, as will here-

the heat was intolerable; so much so, that nobody dared to go below deck to look after the wine and the provisions. This extraordinary heat lasted

after be seen, he based a false theory of the earth not being a true sphere, but pear-shaped. M. Humboldt thus describes the error of Columbus:—"Mais les explications qu'il hasardait de quelques fausses observations de la polaire faites, dans le voisinage des îles Açores, sur les passages supérieurs et inférieurs de l'étoile, et son hypothèse de la figure non sphérique et irrégulière de la terre, qui est *renflée* dans une certaine partie de la zone équatoriale vers la côte de Paria, prouvent qu'il était bien faible dans les premières notions géométriques." — *Examen Critique*, vol. 3, p. 17.

It is, however, to be remarked, that this first observation, alluded to in the text, occurs, as I conceive, or may have occurred, separately from the false observations referred to by M. Humboldt. These are mentioned further on in the narrative:—"Fallé allí que en anocheciendo tenia yo la estrella del Norte alta cinco grados, y estonces las guardas estaban encima de la cabeza, y despues á la media noche fallaba la estrella alta diez grados, y en amaneciendo que las guardas estaban en los piés quince.

"La suavelidad de la mar fallé conforme, mas no en la yerba: en esto de la estrella del Norte tomé grande admiracion, y por esto muchas noches con mucha diligencia tornaba yo á repricar la vista della con el cuadrante, y siempre fallé que caia el plomo y hilo á un punto."—Nav., *Col.* tom. 1, p. 255.

The real polar distance of the north star is 1° 38′ 47″.

It is to be remarked that Columbus, in the above passage, states that he made several observations, and that the north star at night-fall was always in five degrees. The track of his voyage, carefully made from his own narrative, is for a very long distance together in the same parallel of latitude.

I have consulted an eminent person in science, who says, "I have no doubt that, in the fifteenth century, a small handful of degrees was no uncommon error in the observations of an ordinary seaman—and we know nothing of Columbus, as an observer, which should induce us to force any presumptions in his favour." For my own part, though inclined, with Peter Martyr, to touch the matter "with a dry foot" ("*De poli etiam varietate quædam refert, quæ, * * * sicco pertingam pede*"), I cannot help thinking that Columbus was not so much out in all his observations in this third voyage, as from the above he appears to be. It would be worth while for some eminent cosmographer to take this voyage of Columbus and illustrate it carefully. It is not often in the world's history that a series of observations has led to more immediate and practical results.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

eight days. The first day was clear, and if the others had been like it, the Admiral says, not a man would have been left alive, but they would all have been burnt up.

Sails to westward.

At last a favourable breeze sprang up, enabling the Admiral to take a westerly course, the one he most desired, as he had before noticed in his voyages to the Indies that about a hundred miles west of the Azores there was always a sudden change of temperature.* On Sunday, the 22nd of July, in the evening, the sailors saw innumerable birds going from the south-west to the north-east, which flight of birds was a sign that land was not far off. For several successive days birds were seen, and an albatross perched upon the Admiral's vessel. Still the fleet went on without seeing land, and, as it was in want of fresh water, the Admiral was thinking of changing his course; and, indeed, on Thursday, the 31st of July, had commenced steering northwards for some hours, when, to use his own words, "as God had always been accustomed to show mercy to him,"† a certain mariner of Huelva, a follower of the Admiral's, named Alonso Perez, happened to go up aloft upon the maintop-sail of the Admiral's ship, and suddenly saw land towards the south-west, about fifteen leagues off.

Trinidad seen.

* I suppose he came into or out of one of those warm ocean rivers which have so great an effect in modifying the temperature of the earth—perhaps into the one which comes from the south of Africa through the Gulf of Mexico, to our own shores, and on which we so much depend.

† "Como su alta Magestad haya siempre usado de misericordia conmigo."—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 247.

This land which he descried was in the form of three lofty hills or mountains. It would be but natural to conjecture that, as Columbus had resolved to name the first land he should discover "Trinidad," it was by an effort of the will, or of the imagination, that these three eminences were seen first; but it is exceedingly probable that such eminences were to be seen from the point whence Alonso Perez first saw land.*

The sailors sang the "Salve Regina," with other pious hymns in honour of God and "Our Lady," according to the custom of the mariners of Spain, who, in terror or in joy, were wont to find an expression for their feelings in such sacred canticles.†

The Admiral makes for Trinidad.

The Admiral's course, when he was going northwards, had been in the direction of the Carib islands, already well known to him; but with great delight he now turned towards Trinidad, making for a cape, which, from the likeness of a little rocky islet near it to a galley in full sail, he named "La Galera."‡ There he arrived "at the hour of complines," but, not finding the port sufficiently deep for his vessels to enter, he proceeded westwards.

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* Cape Cashepou is backed by three peaked mountains, of which a representation is given in Day's *West Indies*, vol. 2, p. 31.

† "Digeron cantada la Salve Regina con otras coplas y prosas devotas que contienen alabanzas de Dios y de Nuestra Señora, segun la costumbre de los Marineros, al menos los nuestros de España, que con tribulaciones y alegrías suelen decirla."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 131.

‡ This point is sometimes placed at the north-east of Trinidad; but wrongly so. It is now Cape Galeota.—See Humboldt's *Examen Critique*, vol. 1, p. 310.

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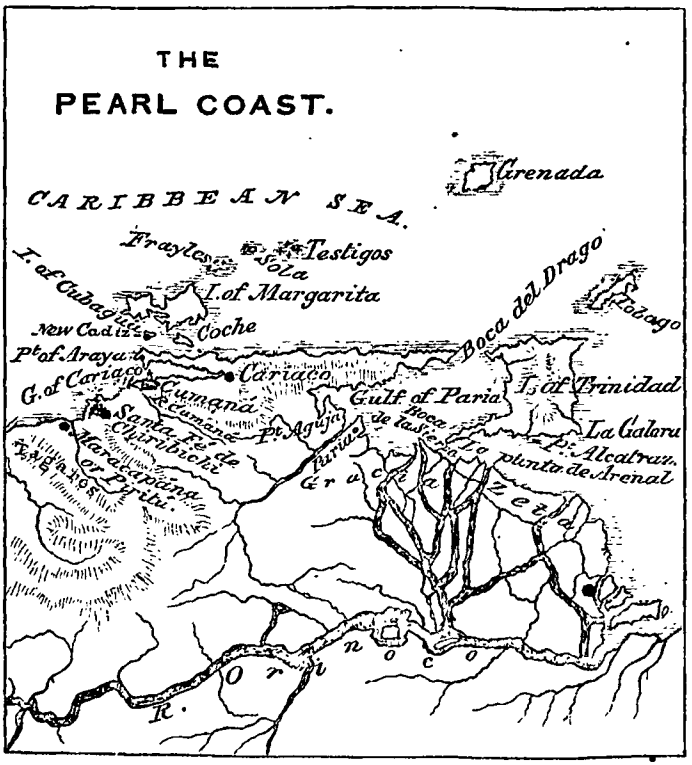
Beauty of the country in Trinidad.

The first thing noticeable on the shores, as he neared them, was that the trees descended to the sea. There were houses and people, and very beautiful lands, which reminded him, from their beauty and their verdure, of the gardens of Valen-



cia as seen in the month of March.* It was also to be observed that these lands were well cultivated.†

On the following morning he continued in a

* "Habia casas y gente, y muy lindas tierras, atan fermosas y verdes como las huertas de Valencia en Marzo."—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 247.—"Mayo" says Las Casas.

† "La tierra era muy labrada, alta y hermosa."—Las Casas,

westerly direction in search of a port, where he might take in water and refit his ships, the timbers of which had shrunk, from extreme heat, so that they sadly needed caulking. He did not find a port, but he came to deep soundings somewhere near Point Alcatraz, where he brought to, and took in fresh water. This was on a Wednesday, the first of August. From the point where he now was, the low lands of the Orinoco must have been visible, and Columbus must have beheld the continent of America for the first time.* He supposed it to be an island of about twenty leagues in extent, and he gave it the somewhat insignificant name of Zeta.

Sees the continent for the first time.

The same signs of felicity which greeted his eyes on his first sight of land, continued to manifest themselves. Farms and populous places† were visible above the water as he coasted onwards; and still the trees descended towards the sea—a sure sign of the general mildness of the weather, wherever it occurs.

The next day he proceeded westwards along the southern part of Trinidad, until he arrived at the westernmost point, which he called "La punta de Arenal;" and now he beheld the gulf of Paria, which he called "La Balena" (the gulf of the whale). It was just after the rainy season,

Sees the Gulf of Paria.

Hist. de las Indias, MS., lib. 1, cap. 132.

* The northern part of the continent had been discovered by Sebastian Cabot, on the 24th of June, 1497.

† "Vido muchas labranzas por luengo de Costa y muchas Poblaciones."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 132.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

and the great rivers which flow into that gulf were causing its waters to rush with impetuosity out of the two openings* which lead into the open sea. The contest between the fresh water and the salt water produced a ridge of waters, on the top of which the Admiral was borne into the gulf at such risk, that, writing afterwards of this event to the Spanish court, he says, "Even to-day I shudder lest the waters should have upset the vessel when they came under its bows."†

Enters the gulf at the Boca de la Sierpe.

Previously to entering the gulf, the Admiral had sought to make friends with some Indians who approached him in a large canoe, by ordering his men to come upon the poop, and dance to the sound of a tambourine; but this, naturally enough, appears to have been mistaken for a warlike demonstration, and it was answered by a flight of arrows from the Indians.

The Admiral, still supposing that he was amongst islands, called the land to the left of him, as he moved up the gulf, the island of Gracia; and he continued to make a similar mistake throughout the whole of his course up the gulf, taking the various projections of the indented coast for islands. Throughout his voyage in the gulf, Columbus met with nothing but friendly treatment from the natives. At last he arrived at a place which the natives told him was called Paria, and where they also informed him that, to

Touches at Paria.

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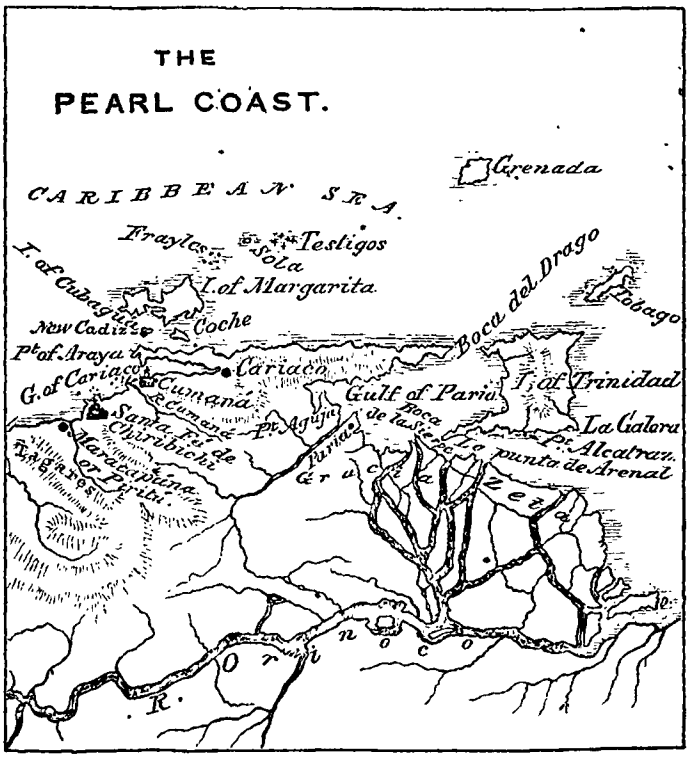
* The Boca del Drago and the Boca de la Sierpe.

† "Que hoy en dia tengo el miedo en el cuerpo que no me trabucasen la nao cuando llegasen debajo della."—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 249.

the westward, the country was more populous. He took four of these natives, and went onwards, until he came to a point which he named *Aguja* (Needle Point), where, he says, he found the most beautiful lands in the world, very populous, and



whence, to use his own words, "an infinite number of canoes came off to the ships."

Proceeding onwards, the Admiral came to a place where the women had pearl bracelets, and, on his enquiring where these came from, they made signs, directing him out of the Gulf of Paria towards the island of Cubagua. Here he

First pearls seen.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

sent some of his men on shore, who were very well received and entertained by two of the principal Indians. It is needless to dwell upon this part of the narrative. Very few of the places retain the names which the Admiral gave them, and, consequently, it is difficult to trace his progress. He began to conjecture, from the immense amount of fresh water brought down by the rivers into the Gulf of Paria, that the land which he had been calling the island of Gracia was not an island, but a continent, of which fact he afterwards became more convinced.* But little time was given him for research of any kind. He was anxious to reach Hispaniola, in order to see after his colonists there, and to bring them the stores which he had in charge; and so, after passing through the "Boca del Drago," and reconnoitring the island of Margarita, which he named, he was compelled to go on his way to Hispaniola. We are hardly so much concerned with what the Admiral saw and heard, as with what he afterwards thought and reported. To understand this, it will be desirable to enter somewhat into the scientific questions which occupied the mind of this great mariner and most observant man.

Why he thinks he has discovered a continent.

Discovery of the continent intentional.

The discovery of the continent of America by Columbus, in his third voyage, was the result of a distinct intention on his part to discover some

* "Yo estoy creido que esta es tierra firme grandísima de que hasta hoy no se ha salido, y la razon me ayuda grandemente de este tan grande rio y mar que es dulce." — Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias,* MS., lib. 1, cap. 138.

new land, and cannot be attributed to chance. It would be difficult to define precisely the train of ideas which led Columbus to this discovery. The Portuguese navigations were one compelling cause.* Then the change, already alluded to, which Columbus had noticed in his voyages to the Indies, on passing a line a hundred leagues west of the Azores, was in his mind, as it was in reality, a circumstance of great moment† and significance. It was not a change of temperature alone that he noticed, but a change in the heavens, the air, the sea, and the magnetic current.‡

In the first place, the needles of the compass, instead of north-easting, north-wested at this line; and that remarkable phenomenon occurred just upon the passage of the line, as if, Columbus says, one passed a hill.§ Then the sea there was full of sea-weed like small pine-branches, laden with a fruit‖ similar to pistachio nuts. More-

Phenomena 100 leagues west of Azores.

* The inhabitants of Santiago, one of the Cape Verde islands, told Columbus "que el Rey Don Juan tenia gran inclinacion de enviar á descubrir al Sudoeste; y que se habian hallado Canoas que salian de la Costa de Guinea que navegaban al Oeste con mercaderías."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 130.

† It is the opinion of Humboldt, as mentioned before, that the celebrated division made by Alexander the Sixth between the Castillian and Portuguese monarchs was adopted in reference to these phenomena which Columbus had noticed; and, if the line of no variation were a "constant," no better marine boundary could well be suggested.

‡ "Cuando yo navegué de España á las Indias fallo luego en pasando cien leguas á Poniente de los Azores grandísimo mudamiento en el cielo é en las estrellas, y en la temperancia del aire, y en las aguas de la mar."—*Tercer Viage de Colon.*—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 254.

§ "Como quien traspone una cuesta."

‖ "Il prend des appendices globuleux et pétiolés pour le fruit du varec."—Humboldt, *Examen Critique*, vol. 3, p. 66, n.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

over, on passing this imaginary line, the Admiral had invariably found that the temperature became agreeable, and the sea calm. Accordingly, in the course of this voyage, when they were suffering from that great heat which has been mentioned, he determined to take a westerly course, which led, as we have seen, to his discovering the beautiful land of Paria.*

Now Columbus was one of those men of divining minds, who must have general theories on which to thread their observations; and, as few persons have so just a claim to theorize as those who have added largely to the number of ascertained facts (a permission which they generally make abundant use of), so Columbus may well be listened to, when propounding his explanation of the wonderful change in sea, air, sky, and magnetic current, which he discerned at this distance of a hundred leagues from the Azores.

Columbus accounts for the change of temperature.

His theory was, that the earth was not a perfect sphere, but pear-shaped; and he thought that, as he proceeded westwards in this voyage, the sea went gradually rising, and his ships rising too, until they came nearer to the heavens.† It is very possible that this theory

* Las Casas, who had other authentic information about this voyage besides the manuscripts of Columbus, says, that the Admiral intended to have gone southwards, after he had taken a westerly course, on quitting the place where he was becalmed. Had he done so, which the state of his ships would not permit, he might have been the discoverer of Brazil.

† "Juzgaba que la mar iba subiendo y los navíos alzándose hácia el cielo suavemente."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 140.

had been long in his mind, or, at any rate, that he held it before he reached the coast of Paria. When there, new facts struck his mind, and were combined with his theory. He found the temperature much more moderate than might have been expected so near the equinoxial line, far more moderate than on the opposite coast of Africa. In the evenings, indeed, it was necessary for him to wear an outer garment of fur. Then, the natives were lighter coloured, more astute, and braver than those of the islands. Their hair,* too, was different.

Then, again, he meditated upon the immense volume of fresh waters which descended into the Gulf of Paria. And, in fine, the conclusion which his pious mind came to, was, that when he reached the land which he called the island of Gracia, he was at the base of the earthly Paradise. He also, upon reflection, concluded that it was a continent which he had discovered, the same continent of the east which he had always been in search of; and that the waters, which we now know to be a branch of the river Orinoco, formed one of the four great rivers which descended from the garden of Paradise.

Believes that he has approached the earthly Paradise.

Very different were the conjectures of the pilots. Some said that they were in the Sea of Spain; others, in that of Scotland, and, being in despair about their whereabouts, they concluded that they had been under the guidance of the

* "Los cabellos largos y llanos cortados á la guisa de Castilla." —Las Casas, lib. 1, cap. 132.

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Devil.* The Admiral, however, was not a man to be much influenced by the sayings of the unthoughtful and the unlearned. He fortified himself by references to St. Isidro, Beda, Strabo, St. Ambrose, and Duns Scotus, and held stoutly to the conclusion that he had discovered the site of the earthly Paradise. It is said, that he exclaimed to his men, that they were in the richest country in the world.†

Columbus claims the land for Los Reyes.

Columbus did not forget to claim, with all due formalities, the possession of this approach to Paradise, for his employers, the Catholic Sovereigns. Accordingly, when at Paria, he had landed and taken possession of the coast in their names, erecting a great cross upon the shore, which, he tells Ferdinand and Isabella, he was in the habit of doing at every headland,‡ the religious aspect of the Conquest being one which always had great influence with the Admiral, as he believed it to have with the Catholic Monarchs. In communicating this discovery, he reminds them how they bade him go on with the enterprize, if he should discover only stones and rocks,

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* "Estando cerca de Pária, el Almirante demandó á los pilotos el punto del viage que llevaban, é unos decian que estaban en la mar de España, é otros en la mar de Escocia, é que todos los marineros venian desesperados, é decian que el diablo los habia traido con el Almirante."—*El pleito por el fiscal del* Rey *contra el* Almirante.—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 3, p. 583.

† "Digo os que estais en la mas rica tierra que hay en el mundo, y sean dadas á Dios muchas gracias por ello."—Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat. de Indias*, lib. 19, cap. 1.

‡ "En todo cabo mando plantar una alta cruz."—*Tercer Viage de Colon.*—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 262.

and had told him that they counted the cost for nothing, considering that the Faith would be increased, and their dominions widened.* Book IX. Ch. 4.

It was, however, no poor discovery of mere "rocks and stones" which the Admiral had now made. It will be interesting to see his first impressions of the men and the scenery of this continent which he had now, unconsciously, for the first time, discovered. He says, "I found some lands, the most beautiful† in the world, and very populous." The lands in the island of Trinidad he had previously compared to Valencia, in Spain, during the month of March. It is also noticeable that he had observed that the fields were cultivated.‡ Of the people, he says, "They are all of good stature, well made, and of very graceful bearing, with much and smooth hair;" and he mentions that on their heads they wore the beautiful Arab head-dress (called *keffeh*), made of

Columbus on the men and scenery of the continent.

Beauty of the coast of Paria.

* "Vuestras Altezas me respondió con aquel corazon que se sabe en todo el mundo que tienen, y me dijo que no curase de nada de eso, porque su voluntad era de proseguir esta empresa y sostenerla, aunque no fuese sino piedras y peñas, y quel gasto que en ello se hacia que lo tenia en nada, que en otras cosas no tan grandes gastaban mucho mas, y que lo tenian todo por muy bien gastado lo del pasado y lo que se gastase en adelante, porque creian que nuestra santa fé seria acrecentada y su Real Señorío ensanchado."—COLUMBUS *á* LOS REYES.—NAV., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 263.

† This is confirmed by BENZONI. "Ceterum, meo judicio, totus ille tractus, et ingenti illi sinui Pariensi adjacens regio quâ meridiem spectat, omnium quotquot adii Indiæ terrarum amœnissima est et feracissima."—*Hist. Nov. Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 3.

‡ "Llegué á un lugar donde me parecian las tierras labradas."—*Tercer Viage de Colon.*—NAV., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 250.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

worked and coloured handkerchiefs, which appeared in the distance as if they were silken.*

Better kind of voyagers give favourable accounts of the natives.

The description given by Columbus of the natives whom he encounters in his voyages is almost always favourable. Indeed, the description of any man or thing depends as much on the person describing, as on the thing or person described. Those little differences in look or dress, which excite the ready mockery of the untravelled rustic, appear very slight indeed to the man who, like Columbus or Las Casas, has seen many lands, and travelled over many minds. The rude Spanish common soldier perceived a far greater difference between himself and the Indian, than did the most accomplished man who visited the Indies, when he made to himself a similar comparison. Occasionally, in a narrow nature, however cultivated,† the commonest prejudices hold their ground; but, in general, knowledge sees behind and beyond disgust, and suffices to conquer it.

Columbus silent about the pearls.

Columbus, however, found the men, the country, and the products, equally admirable. It is somewhat curious that he does not mention his discovery of pearls to the Catholic Monarchs, and he afterwards makes a poor excuse for this. The real reason I conjecture to have been a wish to

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* "Esta gente, como ya dije, son todos de muy linda estatura, altos de cuerpos, é de muy lindos gestos, los cabellos muy largos é llanos, y traen las cabezas atadas con unos pañuelos labrados, como ya dije, hermosos, que parecen de lejos de seda y almaizares."—*Tercer Viage de Colon.*—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 1, p. 252.

† As, perhaps, in that of the historian Oviedo, when speaking of the Indians whom he had lived amongst.

preserve this knowledge to himself, that the fruits of this enterprize might not be prematurely snatched from him. His shipmates, however, were sure to disperse the intelligence; and the gains to be made on the Pearl Coast were, probably, the most tempting bait for future navigators to follow in the track of Columbus, and complete the discovery of the earthly Paradise.

Of the delights of this paradise Columbus himself was to have but a slight and mocking foretaste. He had been constantly ill during the voyage, suffering from the gout and from an inflammation in his eyes which rendered him almost blind. His new colony in Hispaniola demanded his attention, and must often have been the cause of anxious thought to him; and the grave but glowing enthusiast made his way to St. Domingo, and afterwards returned to Spain, to be vexed henceforth by those mean miseries and small disputes which afflicted him for the remainder of his days—miseries the more galling, as they were so disproportionately small in comparison with the greatness of such a man, and with the aims and hopes which they effectually hindered.

Sails for Hispaniola.

It was in December of the same year, 1498, that the intelligence of the Admiral's new discovery reached Spain, and that his own enthusiastic ideas and vivid descriptions of the country he had discovered helped to give an impetus to maritime enterprize in that direction, which was alike injurious to his own fortunes, to the well-

Mischief of rapid discovery in the New World.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

being of the inhabitants of those regions of delight, and to the adoption of anything like a sound system of colonization on the part of Spain. There never was an occasion on which it was more manifest that what is called the "progress of events" was too rapid for the intelligence of men to deal wisely with it, than in these discoveries in America and the West Indies. If the voyages, which were made in four-and-twenty years, could have been extended over a century, it would, to all appearance, have been a singular gain for the whole human family, and not the least for the inhabitants of Africa, who, though not partaking at all in the present struggle, were to pay the largest part of the penalty of defeat.

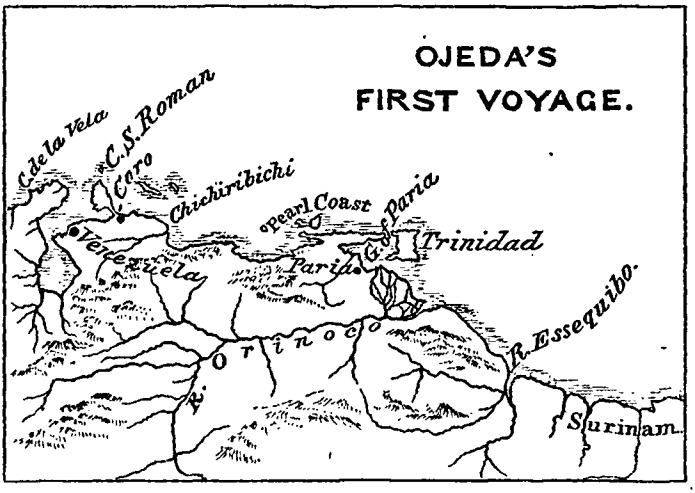
We might as well, however, expect a child to appreciate danger as that men should see they are going beyond their strength; and, accordingly, it was but natural that the Admiral's enterprize should speedily be followed up by similar undertakings, however inadequate or unfitted these might be for the vast opportunity of peaceful colonization which now presented itself to the Spanish Monarchs.

Ojeda's expedition along the Pearl Coast.

Alonso de Ojeda, who enjoyed the powerful patronage of Bishop Fonseca, was the next person to traverse the Pearl Coast, but, alas! how different were his objects, and his modes of accomplishing them, from those of the great explorer who preceded him, and who bitterly resented the invasion of his privileges which these minor

voyages occasioned. The most noted companions of Ojeda were, a very celebrated pilot of that time, called Juan de la Cosa, and Amerigo Vespucci. Amongst the mariners, there were some who had accompanied Columbus in his third voyage. BOOK IX. Ch. 4.

Ojeda commenced this voyage on the 18th or 20th of May, in the year 1499, and it embraced the whole of the coast from Surinam, in what is now called Dutch Guyana, to Cape de la Vela. There Ojeda starts, May, 1499.



is but one thing worthy of note for our purposes in this voyage, and that is, that at Chichiribichi they had a skirmish with the Indians, in which they lost one man, and had twenty others wounded. In the old maps that spot is called the Arrowy Port (*el puerto flechado*), and the feud there may be considered as the beginning of the long and desolating wars between the Spaniards and the natives on the northern coast of South America—wars which for stupid barbarity will

Book IX. Ch. 4.

ever rank highest amongst the most barbarous follies of the world.

His voyage a deplorable one.

Indeed, this voyage of Ojeda's is every way deplorable. It served to mislead the world at the time, and to give America a name which has ever been felt to imply a great injustice: it has caused great trouble to future critics and historians, who have been at great pains to set right the confused and fallacious (I cannot say false),* narrative of Amerigo Vespucci. Its ill success, far from leading the Spanish court to distrust Ojeda, seems to have made him an object of pity, and to have led to his being employed in those

* On this subject there is an astonishing discussion, occupying the fourth volume of Humboldt's *Examen Critique*, and without having read which, no writer ought to apply an epithet to the name of Amerigo Vespucci. The author of the *Examen* shows the same power of observation and combination in grappling with the boundless details of this obscure matter, as in dealing with natural phenomena. History, bibliography, geography, and even astronomy, enter into this remarkable discussion. The result, as expressed in Humboldt's own words, is, "Tout me semble indiquer que de maladroits rédacteurs ont publié, à l'insu du cosmographe florentin, ce que nous possédons de lui." (*Examen Critique*, vol. 4, p. 283.) But he also intimates, throughout the discussion, the necessity there is for great reserve in pronouncing at all upon this difficult matter.

The principal cause of the prevalence of the name America, was the publication, in the year 1507, at the small town of St. Dié in the Vosges, of a work called *Cosmographiæ Introductio cum quibusdam Geometriæ ac Astronomiæ principiis ad eam rem necessariis. Insuper Quatuor Americi Vespucii navigationes.* The author of this work took the name of Hylacomylus. His real name was Martin Waldseemüller.

From the obscure little town of St. Dié the work would easily spread itself, as Humboldt well remarks, into Belgium, France, and Germany; and, indeed, it would be difficult to name any town lying much more centrally to all that was civilized in that age.

The word Amerigo is the same as Amalrich,—"celui qui endure des labeurs."

memorable expeditions which ended in the destruction of himself and Nicuesa, as well as of the important provinces which they were sent to govern. It seems as if even the trifling incidents in this voyage were to lead to historical confusion. A statement has been made, that Ojeda encountered some English not far from Venezuela, and this has naturally been made the subject of comment. But, on investigation, it appears that there is no ground that can be relied upon for this statement.* The only benefit that has accrued to the world from this expedition is a remarkable map made by the pilot Juan de la Cosa, in the year 1500†—a small offset against the many mischiefs which ensued from this disastrous voyage,—disastrous, as I believe, from the inferior character of one or two of the principal persons engaged in it.

Said to have met an English vessel.

Juan de la Cosa's map.

Ojeda's expedition produced very little impression on the public mind in Spain, on account of a voyage which commenced a few days after his, but terminated two months sooner, and which also was a much more memorable expedition. This was undertaken by another celebrated pilot, called Per Alonso Niño, an old companion of Columbus, of whose daring and experience all these mariners now made use, "presuming to take in their hands the thread which the Admiral

Alonso Niño's and Cristóbal Guerra's expedition.

* See the shrewd remarks in Biddle's *Memoir of Sebastian Cabot*, p. 307,—in the spirit of which I entirely agree.

† This map was first published by Humboldt, *Examen Critique*, vol. 5.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

had shown them."* Per Alonso Niño was a poor man, and on that account was obliged to take into partnership a merchant of the name of Luis Guerra, who insisted upon the command of the expedition being entrusted to a brother of his, named Cristóbal Guerra. His force consisted of but one small caravel of fifty tons, manned by thirty-three men; and the fewness of their numbers proved, I have no doubt, a considerable aid to their success. The rights of the great Admiral were so far respected by the Spanish authorities, that, in their instructions to Alonso Niño, they gave orders that he should not land within fifty leagues of the country which the Admiral had discovered.

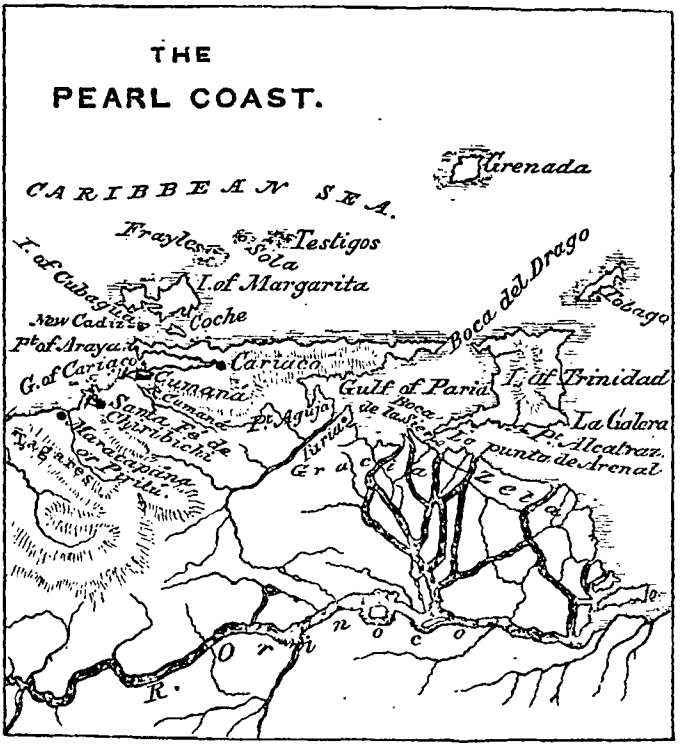
They arrive at Paria.

Cristóbal Guerra and Alonso Niño arrived at the coast of Paria fifteen days after Ojeda had touched at the same coast, and continued to pursue the same route as Ojeda had done, and the Admiral before him. On making their way out of the "Boca del Drago," they encountered eighteen canoes, full of Caribs, who did not hesitate to attack them, but whom they succeeded in putting to flight by discharges of artillery. One canoe, with one Carib in it, they captured, and in this they found a captive Indian, bound, who made known to them by signs, what had been the fate of six others, his companions, namely, that they had been devoured by the Caribs.† He also

* "Que presumieron de se atrever á tomar el hilo en la mano, que el Almirante los habia mostrado."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap, 171.

† I mention this fact to show that the fact of the Caribs being eaters of men was not an invention of the Spaniards to serve their own purposes, which, as it afterwards proved very convenient to them, might be suspected.

showed them how these Caribs came to this coast, bringing with them houses in separate planks, which they put together to protect themselves at night, and whence they sallied forth to make their ferocious incursions along the coast of Cumaná.* Book IX. Ch. 4.



From the Boca del Drago the expedition sailed on westward until they came to Margarita, Come to Margarita.

* "Los cuales, añadió, venian á infestar estas tierras con la precaucion de encastillarse de noche en un recinto de estacas que traian consigo, y de allí salir á sus fechorías."—*Tercer Viage de Colon.*—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 3, p. 12.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

where they landed, being the first Spaniards who had ever touched at that island. There they procured some pearls in exchange for Spanish goods, if by such a name as "goods" we can dignify the pins, needles, glass beads, little bells, and hatchets, which were the customary merchandize for traffic with the new-found Indians.

From thence they passed on to the coast of Curianá, which embraces the province of Cumaná,* and that of Maracapána.

The expedition now entered a port which they compared to Cadiz.† This port is conjectured to have been that of Mochima or Manera. It would be very difficult to determine now what port it really was, but there is no doubt that it was on the Pearl Coast, from reasons which will shortly be manifest.

Their stay at Mochima.

In and near this port the expedition tarried for no less than three months; and, accordingly, we have a brief, but still a most valuable, description of the natives, which will really serve to extend our knowledge of the aborigines of that part of the continent.

Cristóbal Guerra and Alonso Niño were received most amicably. At the spot where they landed there were only seven or eight cottages, but about fifty naked men with an Indian Cacique came

* Great mistakes have occurred in the early historians, Las Casas and Peter Martyr, from confounding this Curianá with another district of the same name in the vicinity of Coro, near Venezuela. — See Navarrete, who has given a very carefully-considered account of this important voyage.—*Coleccion*, tom. 3, p. 13.

† "Gaditano portui simillimum."—Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. 1.

down to the shore, and begged Alonso Niño, with all signs of cordiality (*Nignum amicé amplectentes*), that he would come on to their *pueblo*, which was situated a league further westward. An immediate exchange of property was made between the Christians and the Indians; bells and beads being readily bartered for the strings of pearls which the Indians had on their arms and necks. In an hour, fifteen ounces weight of pearls were exchanged for trifles which cost in Spain two hundred maravedis*—one of the most profitable transactions that was ever entered into by any company of merchants.† Book IX. Ch. 4.

They obtain pearls.

The next day the expedition weighed anchor and moved onwards to the friendly *pueblo*, from whence the embassage had come to entreat their landing. Naturally, the whole population moved down to the water-side to see the strange men and still stranger ship. The Indians invited the Spaniards to land; but when these latter saw a great multitude of people, and reflected that they were but thirty-three in number, and that treachery was not a thing unknown even in Christian countries, they did not venture to trust themselves in the power of their new friends, but invited them to come on board the vessel. The Indians did not hesitate in the least to do this, but manning their canoes, came at once on board

* Equivalent to about one shilling and twopence.

† "Pesaron solas aquellas que en obra de una hora les dieron, quince onzas: valdria lo que les dieron por ellas, obra de dos cientos maravedises."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 171.

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without any signs of fear, bringing with them what pearls they had to offer in exchange for the glittering trifles from Castille. Reassured by the gentleness and simplicity of the Indians, the Spaniards had no further doubts about landing, and when they did land, they met with the most gracious reception, as if it were a meeting of parents and children, instead of one between persons who (if they could claim kindred at all), must carry up the genealogy for thousands of years. The houses were built of wood, being thatched with palm-leaves. Every kind of food was abundant,—fish, flesh, fowls, and bread made of the Indian corn. The game which the Spaniards saw convinced them that they were upon a continent, for nothing of the kind had been seen in the islands.* This country was evidently more civilized in some respects than the islands which had hitherto been discovered, for markets and fairs were established, to which the inhabitants of each *pueblo* brought what they had to sell. Amongst other articles which the Spaniards observed, and which were probably offered to themselves for sale, were jars, pitchers, dishes, porringers, and other vessels of various forms.† These things, which we would now give so much for, as significant of the state of art in that nation

Civilization on the Pearl Coast.

* "De ver Ciervos ó Venados y Conejos, que fuese tierra firme aquella por cierto creyan; como aquellos animales no se oviesen visto hasta entonces en las Islas."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 171.

† "Trayan Tinajas, Cántaros, Ollas, platos y escudillas, y otros vasos de diversas formas para su servicio, á vender."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. 1, cap. 171.

and as affording some clue to their origin, were valueless in the eyes of the Spaniards; but amongst the other articles for sale were some objects which attracted the immediate attention of all the mariners. Such were ornaments of gold, made in the form of little birds, frogs, and other figures, very well wrought. These attractive ornaments, however, were not parted with in the same facile manner that the pearls had been; and, in general, it was remarked that in matters of bargain these Indians haggled in the same manner as, according to PETER MARTYR, women in the Old World are wont to do.* Of the women in these parts it is mentioned, that they were chiefly employed in domestic affairs and agriculture, while the men were engaged in war, in hunting, and in their solemn dances. Domestic† animals were kept and tended by the women in the same way as by the women in Spain. One very ludicrous thing occurred in the bartering between the Spaniards and these Indians. Part of the Spanish cargo consisted of the humble, but—in the Old World—useful articles called pins and needles. The drapery, however, of these Indians being of the scantiest description, and being, for the most part, omitted altogether, the precise use to them of these pins and needles was not very obvious.

Wrought golden ornaments.

Domestic animals.

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* "Haud aliter inter eos replicando, arguendo, differendo agebatur in ea permutatione, quam nostratibus accidit mulieribus, cum sese cum institoribus implicant."—PETER MARTYR, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. I.

† "Anseres anatesque in domibus fœminæ, sicuti nostrates, nutriunt."—PETER MARTYR, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. I.

The Spaniards replied very craftily to enquiries upon this head, that the use of these pins and needles was to get out thorns from the flesh, and, as prickly plants abounded on that coast, more, perhaps, than anywhere in the world, the tide of commerce turned directly, and pins and needles were in the highest demand.

The golden ornaments, before mentioned, were significant of a much more extended commerce than a merely local one. They were at a high price, because they came from a country which was six days distant from Curianá. It was thus that these Indians reckoned distances, and in this way that they answered when asked by the Spaniards, anxiously, though with seeming carelessness, where that "yellow dirt" came from? On being further asked the name of the place, they said that it was called Cauchieto, and, according to this reckoning of six days, it would be forty-two leagues off,—an Indian travelling generally about seven leagues a day.

Expedition arrives at Cauchieto.

To Cauchieto, then, Alonso Niño and Cristóbal Guerra directed the course of their vessel, taking leave of their friends at Curianá, from whom they had met with nothing but kindness and hospitality.* Nor at Cauchieto did the Spanish mariners fail to experience the like good offices at the hands of the natives, who received them as if they had been their brothers. The only distrust which these Indians manifested of the Spaniards was in

* "Mites, simplices, innocentes, et hospitales esse, viginti dierum commercio cognoverunt."—Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. 1.

the care with which they kept their wives and daughters out of sight of the strangers; but they themselves shortly became so familiar with the Spaniards, that they were in and out of the ship, at all hours of the day and night.* Here pearls were dear, and gold was cheap; but it did not turn out to be of fine quality, or in great abundance.

The expedition proceeded onwards, anchoring in the various ports and bays which there are on that coast, until it came to a very beautiful spot near a river, where there were not only houses, but places of fortification. There were also gardens of such beauty that one of the voyagers, afterwards giving evidence in a lawsuit connected with the proceedings on that coast, declared that he had never seen a more delicious spot. The Indians here, however, were not friendly, and appeared in a body of one or two thousand men, armed with clubs, and bows and arrows, ready to oppose any landing of the Spaniards. This is supposed, and with some reason, to have been Chichiribichi, where Alonso de Ojeda had already had a skirmish with the Indians, and, therefore, had prepared them for giving an ill reception to any of his countrymen who should come that way. How important it is that the first communications with the natives of newly discovered lands should be friendly. This unexpected demeanour of the

Fortifications and beautiful gardens.

* "El dia y la noche nunca cesavan de venir unos y ir otros, entrar unos y salir otros, con grande alegría seguridad y regocijo." —Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 1, cap. 171.

Book IX. Ch. 4.

natives was considered very strange, but will not be thought so by any one who knows the career of Ojeda, a man totally and absolutely unfit for that nice diplomacy clothed in a frank and fearless bearing, which is more needful in dealing with half-civilized men than with the most refined courts of ancient countries.

The Spaniards then returned to their friends at Curianá, where they found a new supply of pearls ready for them, of the finest quality, and of the largest size, many of them being as big as filberts, though very badly strung, as the Indians had no good instruments to work with, being deficient in iron. The Spaniards and Indians parted good friends, each thinking that they had made very good bargains. The pearls weighed an hundred and fifty marks,* and had cost about ten or twelve ducats.

Cristóbal Guerra and Alonso Niño return. 1500.

This expedition quitted that coast in February, 1500, and, after a difficult passage of sixty-one days, reached Bayona, in Galicia, the mariners being laden with pearls as if they were carrying bundles of straw.† It cannot be doubted but that the news of this remarkable voyage must have spread quickly all over Spain and Hispaniola, and have determined the immediate occupation of the whole of the Pearl Coast. Cubagua was found to be the natural seat of the pearl fishery; and that

* Oviedo estimates the pearls at fifty marks, and says that they were good, but small, not one of them weighing as much as five carats (çinco quilates).—*Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 1, cap. 1.

† "Accedunt tandem nautæ unionibus, uti paleis, onusti."—Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, dec. 1.

New Cadiz founded in Cubagua.

little island, which had never been inhabited by the Indians on account of its sterility, and the entire absence of any fresh water, was occupied by the Spaniards, and a town built there, to which the name of New Cadiz was given. Such was the pressure of commercial transactions, that an old writer likens the bustle and movement in the town to the play of fire amidst dry branches,* and gives a list of the sumptuous houses that were built there.†

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* "Con tal hervor y tal desasosiego
Cuanto por secas ramas vivo fuego."
—Juan de Castellanos, *Elegías de Varones Ilustres de Indias*, primera parte, elegía 13, canto 1.

† "Fué la de Barrionuevo la primera,
Un escudero natural de Soria,
Fué luego la de Joan de la Barrera,
Cuyo valor es digno de memoria;
Y luego la de Pedro de Herrera
De quien pudiera yo tejer historia,
Y la de Castellanos, tesorero,
Que fué de los mejores el primero."
—Castellanos, *Elegías*, prim. part., elegía 13, canto 1.

CHAPTER V.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RELIGIONS OF THE NEW WORLD—AN IMAGINARY VOYAGE.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

THE expedition of Alonso Niño and Cristóbal Guerra, which was narrated in the preceding chapter, is important, not only as giving us an insight into the primitive ways and manners of the Indians of the Pearl Coast, but also because it clearly shows how well they might have been managed by means of purely commercial expeditions. This enterprize was so completely mercantile, that we learn from it nothing but what an observant merchant would have told us, who did not go beyond his trade. Not a word is said of the laws, the social customs, or the religion, of the Indians on the Pearl Coast. But, fortunately, from other sources we are able to ascertain what was their religion, which indeed may chiefly be described by negatives. Columbus testifies that they had none.* Amerigo Vespucci says (and I am convinced that his words relate to what took place in Ojeda's first expe-

* "El Almirante dice que no se les conocia secta alguna."—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 3, p. 211, note.

dition*.. to the Pearl Coast), that they did not perceive any sacrifices, nor any places of worship; and he likens the life and tenets of the Indians he saw to those of the ancient Epicureans.† Another authority of later date, but of much larger experience and cognizance of this particular subject, describes the religion of the inhabitants of the whole of the Pearl Coast as being of the least formal and established character.‡

Religion on the Pearl Coast.

I do not know that an attempt which I have made to bring into one view the religions of the various nations and tribes discovered by the Spaniards and Portuguese can be more fitly introduced at any juncture in this history than the present. The leading idea of Las Casas was eminently religious: it will be well, therefore, to form some general notion of what he and others had to contend against, or to act with, in the religious creeds and observances of the natives of America. The great difficulty in historical writing is to present anything which shall contain a great many facts, and yet be possible to be remembered; and it is not beneath the writers, or the readers, to avail themselves of any mode of

* See the minute comparison in the *Examen Critique*, vol. 4, between the facts of Vespucci's first voyage and what we know, from authentic sources, of Ojeda's.

† "Etenim non persensimus quod sacrificia ulla faciant aut quod loca orationisve domos aliquas habeant. Horum vitam, quæ omnino voluptuosa est, Epicuream existimo."—*Viages de Vespucio.*—Nav., *Col.*, tom. 3, p. 211.

‡ "Ningun Ídolo, ni Templo se ha visto, ni se cree tener, ni aver tenido todas aquellas Gentes, solamente tienen Sacerdotes que los doctrinan, en la doctrina de Satanás, enseñados por este malo, y capital enemigo."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 6, cap. 33.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

classifying and arranging facts, which does not falsify them or place them in unreal positions.

Vessels have often been sent out, at least in our own times, for some particular object, other than the usual ones of conquest or of commerce; and if we may imagine a vessel to have been sent out by the pious Monarch of Spain for the purpose of investigating the religious rites and opinions of the various nations in the New World, it would have been very curious and instructive to read the account of the voyage given in the log book, and to study the report, brought home by the captain, of the religious aspect of the various coasts. It is supposed that there were voyages of which no record was kept in the books at Cadiz, or at Seville, (*viages incógnitos* they are called); and some such voyage we will imagine, whether made by official command, or by the secret enterprize of private individuals.

An imaginary voyage in the "Santa Flor."

It shall be in the "Santa Flor," a vessel carrying two hundred men, and having on board some of the companions of Columbus, Ojeda, Pinzon, and Vespucci. I do not like to be too precise about the date (dates are very dangerous things for a fictitious narrative), but it shall have started some time after the occupation of Cuba, and before the conquest of Mexico.

Years have passed by since the time of those voyages of Columbus, Ojeda, Cristóbal Guerra, and Alonso Niño, commemorated in the preceding chapter. The early discoverers are reaping their rewards of poverty and neglect. Cortes is a

young man deep in debt and in intrigue. Pizarro — nobody thinking much of him — is doing the work of a second-rate soldier, in a stern, creditable manner. Las Casas is on some of his journeys, or fighting his way at court; and, if at court, he is writing memorials all the morning, besieging audience-rooms in the afternoon, and dignifying the life of an applicant by the entire unselfishness of his objects. Pedro de Córdova, Antonio Montesino, and other monks are praying, and preaching, and doing all that in them lies, to keep the name of Christ before the Spaniards, and to introduce it, with some hope of its being received, to the notice of the Indians in Hispaniola and on the Pearl Coast.

How some of the noted men of the Indies are occupied.

In the Old World things are proceeding much as usual. Princes are warring or intriguing for possessions, which they will not know how to administer when they have gained them, and which will be an addition to their titles and a diminution of their strength. Nowhere is the discovery of the New World thought much of, except, perhaps, by a few learned men, who, it may be observed in all ages, appreciate the great changes of the world more readily than most of those persons who are considered eminently practical, and are versed in affairs. But the learned have practised their imagination, and are accustomed to look a long way off. Besides, on the other hand, we must not suppose that the discovery of the New World presented the same appearance to the statesmen of that day that it does to us. The original and guiding error of Columbus continued

State of things in the Old World.

for a long time to beset them. In the books, or rather little pamphlets,* which were published at that time, the new lands did not always gain the great name of New World (which, I suppose, they owe to Peter Martyr); and certainly with princes and statesmen, these great discoveries were often but a way to the Spice Islands, and the land discovered but the westernmost part of Asia—a country they already knew sufficiently about.

Then, again, there was that invariable cause for men's indifference to great things, which has been alluded to before, namely, the presence close to their eyes, of the petty and personal affairs of their own place and time, which leaves but a small residue of attention applicable to anything that does not press to be thought about, or done, immediately.

It is not surprizing, therefore, especially when the peculiarly troubled state of Europe at that period is taken into consideration, that the discovery of the New World did not at once absorb all that attention which its importance demanded. How much it did obtain—how much more, I imagine, than has hitherto been supposed—has been seen, and will continue to be shown, in these pages.

Accordingly, the "Santa Flor" not being fitted to receive slaves, nor intended to bring back gold

* See such titles as Von den Newen Insulen und landen so yetz kürtzlichen erfunden seynd durch den kunigh von Portigal. Leipsik, 1506.

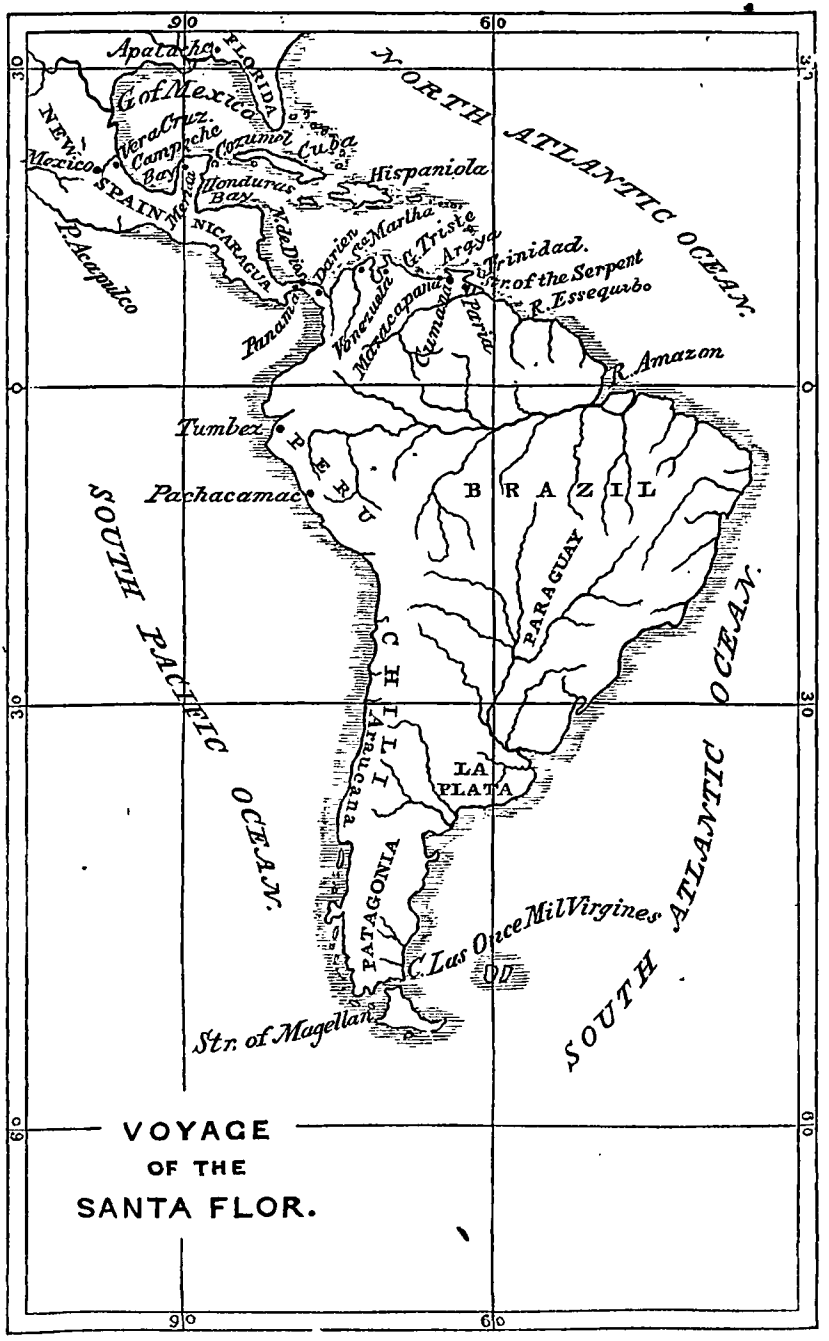
and pearls, may have glided out very quietly from San Lucar, the rest of the population being intent upon their own business, and talking, when they had spare time, of the designs of France, or the schemes of Venice, or of that sure ally and sound theologian, the King of England. Book IX. Ch. 5. The "Santa Flor" sails from San Lucar.

The mariners of the "Santa Flor" would not have departed without confessing, and receiving the Sacrament. This done, they take their departure; and without any difficulty (for they have good charts on board, and, amongst other maps, that of Juan de la Cosa) they steer straight for Trinidad, and then round the south coast of that island, through the "Strait of the Serpent," at which point their investigations commence. Approaching Paria—the earthly Paradise of Columbus,—however careful a look-out was kept, no idol and no temple would be seen. Here they find anchorage. Arrives at Trinidad.

By night, sweet odours,* varying with every hour† of the watch, were wafted from the shore to the vessel lying near; and the forest trees, brought together by the serpent tracery of myriads of strange parasitical plants, might well seem to the fancy like some great design of building, over which the lofty palms, a forest

* "Pariæ littus tantâ gratissimorum odorum suavitate fragrat, ut renascentis veris patria jure censeri possit."—CORNELIUS WYTFLIET, *Descriptionis Ptolemaicæ Augmentum*, p. 141.

† "Every quarter of an hour different balsamic odours fill the air, and other flowers alternately unfold their leaves to the night, and almost overpower the senses with their perfume."—*Travels in Brazil in the Years* 1817-1820. By Dr. JOHN BAPT. VON SPIX, and Dr. C. F. PHIL. VON MARTIUS. Vol. 1, book 2, chap. 1.


NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN.
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN.
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN.
Apalachc.
FLORIDA
Gof Mexico
Vera Cruz.
Campeche Bay
Cozumel
Cuba
Hispaniola
Honduras Bay
NEW Mexico
SPAIN
NICARAGUA
Mde Dios
Darien
St. Martha
G. Triste
Trinidad.
Str. of the Serpent
R. Essequibo
P. Acapulco
Panama
Venezuela
Maracapana
Cumana
Paria
R. Amazon
Tumbez
PERU
Pachacamac
BRAZIL
PARAGUAY
CHILI
Valparaiso
LA PLATA
PATAGONIA
C. Las Once Mil Virgines
Str. of Magellan
VOYAGE
OF THE
SANTA FLOR.

upon a forest,* appeared to present a new order of architecture. In the back-ground rose the mist, like incense. These, however, were but the evening fancies of the mariner, who had before him fondly in his mind the wreathed pillars of the cathedral of Burgos, or the thousand-columned Christian mosque of Cordova, or the perfect fane of Seville; and when the moon rose, or the innumerable swarms of luminous insects swept across the picture, it was but a tangled forest after all, wherein the shaping hand of man had made no memorial to his Creator.

No temples.

Occasionally, grand and elaborate dances of men would be visible through the trees; but whether these were meant to express joy, or sorrow, or devotion, would be moot points with the mariners. The voyage is recommenced. They sail by the sandy shore of Araya, see the lofty cocoa-nut trees that stand over Cumaná, pursue their way along that beautiful coast, noticing the Piritú palm at Maracapána, then traverse the difficult waters of the gloomy Golfo Triste, pass the province of Venezuela, catch a

* "If I might yield here to the charm of memory, I would dwell on scenes deeply imprinted on my own recollection—on the calm of the tropic nights, when the stars, not sparkling, as in our climates, but shining with a steady beam, shed on the gently heaving ocean a mild and planetary radiance;—or I would recal those deep wooded valleys of the Cordilleras, where the palms shoot through the leafy roof formed by the thick foliage of other trees, above which their lofty and slender stems appear in lengthened colonnades, 'a forest above a forest.' "—"This expression is taken from a beautiful description of tropical forest scenery by Bernardin De St. Pierre, in *Paul and Virginia*." —Humboldt's *Kosmos*, vol. I, p. 7, and note.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

glimpse of the white summits of the mountains above Santa Martha, continue on their course to Darien, now memorable for the failure of so many great enterprizes—and still no temple, no great idol, no visible creed, no *cultus*.*

No worship.

Accustomed to a land at home where every height, seen dimly in the distance, might prove a cathedral tower, a church spire, a pilgrims' oratory,

* "Dejada esta parte occidental y septentrional de estas Indias, y pasándonos á la otra parte meridional donde cae la costa que decimos de Pária y por allí arriba y abajo cuasi por todas aquellas partes, las gentes de ellas tenian poco mas y poco menos una manera de religion, teniendo algunos Ídolos y Dioses proprios; pero en universal todos pretendian haber uno comun de todos, y este era el Sol; templo empero ninguno."—Las Casas, *Hist. Apologética*, MS., cap. 124.

The *Historia Apologética* is another of the large works written by the indefatigable Las Casas, which repose in manuscript. It aims at giving an ample account of the manners, laws, and religion of the Indians in the New World. The leading idea of it, as appeared to me from a cursory and partial examination, is to repel all attacks against the Indian races by counter attacks upon other races, especially those which are celebrated in the world's history. If it must be admitted that the Mexicans were guilty of bloody and numerous sacrifices, still what does not Trogus Pompeius confess with respect to similar practices amongst the early Greeks and Romans? Such is the course of argument, not quite so briefly given, that Las Casas adopts in this elaborate work, which is enriched and confused by abundant quotations.

The above is a line of reasoning, just in itself, and very naturally adopted, in a pedantic age, by a man whose greatest enterprizes had often been hindered, or cut short, by the shameful and unjust prejudices, entertained on the part of the learned, against that unfortunate race whose cause he was advocating.

He is occasionally led by his advocacy into making rather rude remarks about modern nations, as may be seen from the following passage:—"Comprehéndense tambien dentro de la segunda (especie de bárbaros) por tres qualidades, la una en quanto carecian de letras, ó de literal loqucion, como los Ingleses."—*Hist. Apol.*, Epílogo.

The copy of the *Apologética* which I have consulted is to be found in the splendid collection of MSS. of Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart., of Middle Hill, to whose courtesy I am much indebted.

or at least a way-side cross, these religious explorers must often have strained their sight in order to recognize some object of a similar character. But on nearing the coast, and bringing dubious objects clearly into view, they would find nothing but the symmetrical aloe or the beds of prickly cactus, like fortresses, on the sea-shore; or if they ventured further inwards, and entered upon the interminable *llanos*, they beheld nothing but a wide waste, like the track of a great conqueror, herbless and treeless, save where some withered-looking palms offered a light and mocking shade, standing up rarer than the masts of lone vessels on great seas. BOOK IX. Ch. 5.

From Darien to Panamá,—from Panamá to Nicaragua,—and still nothing* to remind them of religion, unless it were the beauty of nature, and the town of Nombre de Dios, so named by Nicuesa in his extremity. Still, if they had landed, they might have found amongst the natives the knowledge that there was One God, and that some sort of sacrifices were offered up to him.† No temples.

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* I think the following remarks of LAS CASAS apply to this part of the coast:—"No tenian Ídolos sino Barros, y estos no para adorallos por Dioses, sino por imaginacion que les ponian ciertos Sacerdotes, y á aquellos el Diablo, que les podian hacer algun bien como dalles hijos y embialles agua y otras cosas útiles semejantes" . . . . . "No hacian ceremonias esteriores y sensibles, sino muy pocas, y estas exercitaban por aquellos Sacerdotes." — *Hist. Apologética*, cap. 120.

† "Tenian conocimiento alguno de Dios Verdadero, y que era uno que moraba en el Cielo, al qual en la lengua de las gentes del Darien, llamaban Chicuhna. Querian decir por este nombre, Principio de todo. Á este acudian con todos sus necesidades, pidiéndole remedio de ellas, y á él hacian sus sacrificios." — TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 6, cap. 33.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

Pyramidal temples, and human sacrifices.

Soon, however, in sailing northwards, white buildings would be seen amidst the trees, bearing some likeness to truncated pyramids, and, in the setting sun, dark figures would be seen against the horizon on the tops of these pyramids, from whose gestures it would be sadly and reluctantly admitted by the horror-stricken crew that they were looking upon that affront to Heaven, a human sacrifice. Then some of the crew would be heard to regret (though it would be called a false philosophy by others) the poor and meagre religion of the natives of the Pearl Coast, where there were no temples and no statues; and where, when they landed, they found no *cultus* beyond that pertaining to witchcraft.

Bay of Honduras.

Again, a long extent of low-lying coast with dense forests coming down to the water's edge, but no signs of temples or of worship, until the Bay of Honduras is entered by these religious explorers, when lo! they come upon some buried city, buried so long ago, that huge trees have risen amongst its ruins, and gigantic parasites have twisted their lithe arms around columns, and thrown their shoots along peristyles, playing with the strange faces in stone, overshadowing winged symbols of power* and sacrificial instruments, and embracing the carved imagery of fruits and flowers, their kindred.† No living creatures,

A buried city.

* See, for example, the ruins of Ocosingo.—Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, vol. 2, p. 259.

† "On the left bank of the river Montagua, in the lands called Quirigua, about six leagues from the town of Yzabal, on the Gulf of Dulce, there are some remains of antiquity, that, were they better known, would excite

but the animals which have retaken their own, are to be seen there; and none remain to tell by word or gesture the meaning of the mounds of stone which for miles around render the burthened earth uneven and difficult to the amazed explorers, who return to their vessel with that involuntary respect for the new country which great antiquity engenders in the minds of all men, especially in those of the pious and learned, to whom, strange to say, the past is always more of a home for thought than the future. These do not forget the object of their mission, and note with care the buildings which seem to have been devoted to religion, and, seeing the ruins of pyramids, cannot divest themselves of the idea that these buildings have been sacred to no good purpose, and that the city has been condemned of God for its inhuman and bloody idolatries. If the religious explorers had the courage to make their way

Reverence for antiquity.

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the admiration of archæologists. They consist of seven quadrilateral columns, from twelve to twenty-five feet high, and three to five feet at the bases, as they now stand; four pieces of an irregularly oval figure, twelve feet by ten or eleven feet, not unlike sarcophagi; and two other pieces, large square slabs, seven and a half feet by three feet, and more than three feet thick. All are of stone resembling the primitive sandstone, and, except the slabs, are covered on all sides with sculptured devices, among which are many heads of men and women, animals, foliage, and fanciful figures, all elaborately wrought in a style of art and good finish that cause surprise on inspecting them closely. The columns appear to be of one piece, having each side entirely covered with the figures in relief. The whole have sustained so little injury from time or atmospheric corrosion, that, when cleared from an incrustation of dirt and moss, they show the lines perfect and well defined. Evidently they are the performances of a skilful and ingenious people, whose history has been lost probably for ages, or rather centuries." —Baily's *Cent. America*, p. 65.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

into the country, they came upon a people whose religious traditions must have reminded them of the fallen angels of sacred, and the Titans of classic story; which told of the rebellious nature of the elder children of a great deity, who had sought to create for themselves, and whose impious attempts had resulted in the production of common household things,—cups, and jars, and cooking vessels; while their younger brethren, strong in their humility, were permitted to create man.*

Come to Cozumel.

The crew of the "Santa Flor" resume their voyage, and still steering northwards, come to the mysterious island of Cozumel, where they are in no doubt about the horrors which take place in the way of human sacrifices; and the beauty of all the buildings they see around them is repulsive in their sight. Little are these good men consoled by seeing the carved likeness of a

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* "De la creacion pues tenian esta opinion. Decian que antes de ella ni habia cielo ni tierra, ni Sol, ni Luna, ni estrellas. Ponian que hubo un Marido y una muger divinos que llamaron *Hehel Iltcaurma.* (I am not by any means sure of this reading of the MS. as regards the two last words.) Estos habian tenido padre y madre, los cuales engendraron trece hijos, y que el mayor con algunos con él se ensoberbecieron, y quiso hacer criaturas contra la voluntad del padre y madre, pero no pudieron, porque lo que hicieron fueron unos vasos viles de servicio como jarros y ollas y semejantes. Los hijos menores que se llamaban Huncheven y Hunahan pidieron licencia á su padre y madre para hacer criaturas y concediéronsela, diciéndoles que saldrian con ello porque se habian humillado. Casi lo primero hicieron los Cielos y Planetas, luego Ayre, Agua y Tierra. Despues dicen que de la Tierra formaron al hombre y á la muger. Los otros que fueron soberbios presumiendo hacer criaturas contra la voluntad de los Padres fueron en el Infierno lanzados."—Las Casas, *Hist. Apologética,* MS., cap. 235.

cross in this island; and they moralize on the power of the Evil One, who is allowed for a time to indulge in mockeries and mummeries of sacred things. Book IX. Ch. 5.

Round the dry plains of Merida the vessel makes its way, and then across the Bay of Campeché to what will be Vera Cruz; and, wherever they catch a glimpse of land, they make out in the far distance those truncated pyramids which have already caused them so much horror. Merida.

Abandoning their vessel, these intrepid explorers move across the grand plateau of "New Spain" as it will be called, beholding the vast pyramids, of Egyptian form and magnitude, which were the boast and the delight of Cholula, Tapantla, and Mexico, then called Temixtitan. Shuddering, when they behold the unkempt priests, and hear, from afar off, the dreadful tones of the Mexican *teponastli*,* our travellers creep onwards, no longer in any doubt of the nature of the sacrifices which those barbaric sounds announce—sacrifices reminding the more learned amongst them of the superstitions of ancient Rome, with all the minute inspection and parade of the creature sacrificed. New Spain.

Stopping to investigate the mighty city of Temixtitan, the scientific explorers are confounded at discovering so much knowledge of the stars, the nicest measurement of time, with great skill and adroitness in the mechanical arts, wise laws, even refined manners, in a spot which they Wonders of Temixtitan.

* A drum used in solemn sacrifices.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

now look upon as the head-quarters of a most blood-thirsty and thoroughly established idolatry. The wise men of this expedition, with all their experience at home, have not yet become accustomed to an assured fact in human life,—namely, that the utmost cleverness and sagacity in one direction may co-exist with the utmost abandonment of thought in another.

A Mexican sacrifice.

Once, being detained in a dense crowd in the square of the great temple, whither our explorers had gone disguised in Mexican costume, they become unwilling spectators of a human sacrifice. At first, they see six priests, five of them clothed in white, and the sixth, or chief priest, in red, and otherwise richly attired. Inquiring his name, they are answered, Tezcatlipuk, or Huitzilopochtli, and are astonished, knowing these to be the names of Mexican divinities, and not being aware that the chief priest assumed for the day the name of the god who was honoured by the sacrifice.*

Scanning this group of priests more closely, the Spanish explorers discover that the priests are carrying to the upper area of the temple the body of a naked and living man. The long flights of steps are slowly mounted, and the unfortunate victim placed upon a large, convex, green stone. Four of the attendant priests hold him down by the arms and legs, while a fifth

* The victim on some occasions also represented the Deity to whom the sacrifice was made, which seems to indicate a great mystery.

places a wooden instrument, of a serpent form, across his throat. The convex altar raises the body of the victim into an arched shape, and enables the chief priest to make, with more facility, the fatal incision, and to remove the heart of the victim.* Book IX. Ch. 5. A Mexican sacrifice.

The heart was then presented to the idol, being laid within his uncouth hand, or placed upon his altar.

It was a beautiful day on which I imagine the pious explorers to have been witnesses of this dread scene. The emeralds worn by the chief priest glittered in the sun; and his feathers fluttered lightly with the breeze. The bright pyramidal temples were reflected in the lake and in a thousand minor mirrors formed by the enclosed waters in the water-streets. A busy, pleasant noise from the adjacent market-place was heard throughout the great square. The victim had uttered no sound. He knew the

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* "Estando en este principio de tormento, y pena este Hombre perdigado, y condenado á esta muerte, asido de piés, y manos, y garganta, llegaba el Sacerdote Supremo con el cuchillo, ó navaja, y abríale con mucha presteça, y liberalidad el pecho, que casi no era oído, ni visto, con el exercicio, y curso grande que tenia, y sacábale el coraçon, y assí baheando se lo mostraba al Sol, á quien ofrecia aquel calor, y vaho; y bolviéndose hácia el Ídolo, daba con él en el umbral de su Capilla, por la parte de fuera, y allí dejaba hecha una mancha de sangre, y caìa el coraçon en tierra, de donde lo tomaban, y puesto en un Vaso mui pintado hecho de calabaça, que llaman Xicalli, poníanlo delante del Altar, como ofreciéndolo al Ídolo, por la parte mas principal de aquel cuerpo muerto, cuia Ánima yá tenia en su prision, y penas."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 7, cap. 19.

For a full account of these ceremonies, see Clavigero's *Hist. of Mexico*, English translation, book 6, section 18.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

inutility of any outcry. In Mexico, priests, victims, and people, were alike accustomed to view such ceremonies, and this was one of the ordinary sacrifices. The expression of the faces in the crowd was calm and almost self-satisfied. All around was beautiful and serene, and it was hardly until the mangled body, hurled down from the upper area of the temple, had come near to the feet of the astounded voyagers, that they could believe they had really seen what passed before their eyes. Without saying a word to each other, they withdraw from the great square, and are no more seen in the streets of Mexico that day. If the passion for research did not suffice to conquer all disgust, they would, doubtless, have quitted the city on that evening; but a strange fascination retains them within its walls, and they regard, with still greater curiosity than ever, the marks of high civilization and careful polity, which were to be seen in every district of that vast and unholy metropolis of the Aztecs.

The bystanders.

It is not always, however, the natural disgust of humane men at witnessing bloody idolatries that the pious voyagers experience while staying in the great city, or passing across the lofty table lands of Mexico. Occasionally, their disgust at cruelty is changed into a devout horror, or an almost unwilling admiration, when they perceive, in this Mexican religion, words, phrases, ideas and ceremonies which remind them of all they have been taught to venerate in their own religion. They stop before the great dark idol,

called Tezcatlipuk,* the god, they are told, of penitence, of jubilees, and of the pardon of sins. They look up at his large golden ear, with wreaths of smoke depicted upon it, which, they are told, are meant to signify the prayers of the afflicted that are addressed to him. They are dazzled by the plate of burnished gold in his left hand, in which, they are informed, lie mirrored the deeds of the whole world, and they learn with satisfaction that the arrows in his right hand signify the punishments which he inflicts upon the wicked.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

Tezcatlipuk.

The more they investigate, the more they find of strange resemblances to their own religion. They marvel at the dexterity, and shudder at the

Strange resemblances.

* "Otro ydolo avia en México muy principal, que era el dios de la penitencia, y de los jubileos y perdon de pecados. Este ydolo se llamava Tezcatlipuca, el qual era de una piedra muy relumbrante, y negra como azavache, vestido de algunos atavíos galanos á su modo. Tenia çarcillos de oro, y de plata en el labio baxo un cañutillo christalino de un xeme de largo, y en el metida una pluma verde, y otras vezes azul, que parecia Esmeralda, ó Turquesa. La coleta de los cabellos le ceñia una cinta de oro bruñido, *y en ella por remate una oreja de oro con unos humos pintados en ella que significavan los ruegos de los afligidos, y pecadores, que oya quando se encomendavan á él.* Entre esta oreja y la otra salian unas garçotas en grande numero: al cuello tenia un joyel de oro colgado, tan grande que le cubria todo el pecho: en ambos braços braçales de oro: en el ombligo una rica piedra verde, en la mano yzquierda un mosqueador de plumas preciadas, verdes, azules, amarillas, que salian *de una chapa de oro reluziente muy bruñido, tanto que parecia espejo: en que dava á entender, que en aquel espejo via todo lo que se hazia en el mundo.* A este espejo, ó chapa de oro llamavan Itlacheáya, que quiere dezir, su mirador. *En la mano derecha tenia quatro saetas, que significavan el castigo, que por los pecados dava á los malos.*"—Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, lib. 5, cap. 9.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

audacity, with which the Evil One has imitated* the sacraments and the usages of the Catholic Church. A few of the more thoughtful amongst these explorers, when they consider these startling resemblances, conclude with justice, that such things either manifest great laws of the mind, developing themselves alike in various races of the human family, however differently situated; or that they offer indications of much descent yet untraced, and much history yet hidden from the world; and, in either case, that these resemblances afford worthy material for the most diligent research.

A great subject for research.

Throughout these investigations, one subject of surprize impresses itself upon their minds,—namely, how the Indians themselves are induced to bear the tyranny of this idolatry. The explorers venture by degrees to intimate this question, the terms of which are not even understood, or seem not to be, by the greater part of those to whom they address themselves, though from one faithful guide they learn with delight, that there

How the idolaters endure the tyranny of their idols.

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* See the following chapters in Acosta, *Hist. Nat. y Moral de las Indias:*—Lib. 5, cap. 23. Como el demonio ha procurado remedar los Sacramentos de la sancta Iglesia. Cap. 24. De la manera con que el demonio procuró en México, remedar la fiesta del Corpus Christi, y communion que usa la sancta Iglesia. Cap. 25. De la Confession, y confessores, que usavan los Indios. Cap. 26. De la uncion abominable que usavan los Sacerdotes Mexicanos, y otras naciones, y de sus hechizeros.

Even the mode of sustaining the priests must have reminded the explorers of similar usages at home, "Habia (en la Nueva España), como en nuestras Iglesias decimos, 'Mesa Capitular,'—conviene a saber estaban ciertas tierras y heredades dedicadas por los Reyes y Señores para propios de los Templos."—Las Casas, *Hist. Apologética*, cap. 141.

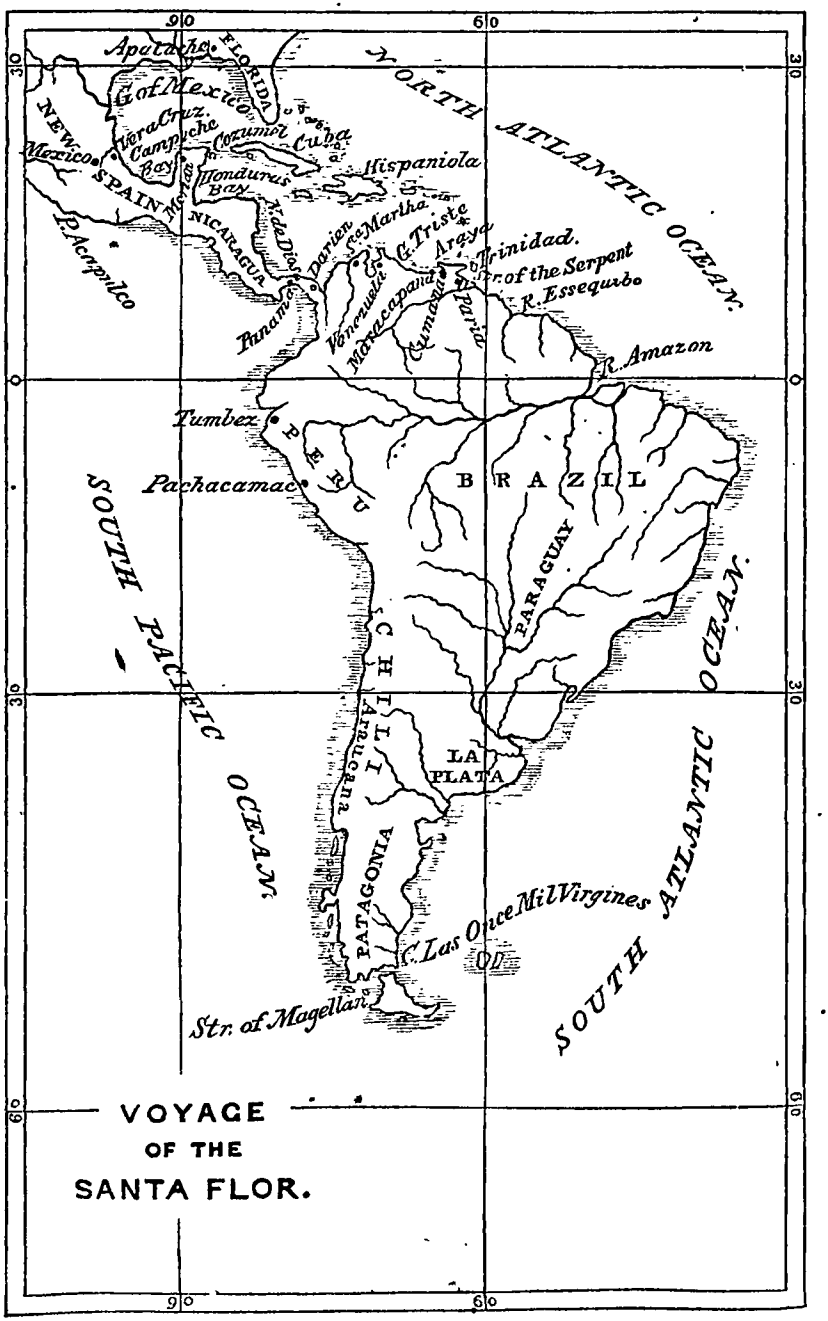
are men, who, like himself, are wearied by the hard things which these false gods impose upon them, and who have long been thinking of flying to some other creed.* Book IX. Ch: 5.

The expedition, with great pain and labour, construct a new "Santa Flor," and take ship again at the port of Acapulco; and now steering southward, they reach a land, where, though they see great edifices, they happily find a less severe superstition, and fewer buildings dedicated to unholy purposes, than they had left in Mexico. The explorers take ship at Acapulco.

Soon they discern no buildings and no temples; and when they land, as they do in the Bay of Panamá, they find that they have returned to a ruder and more primitive race of men. Slowly, along the beautiful shores of the mild Pacific, the vessel makes its labouring way, when of a sudden the evening sun is reflected from vast buildings of a stately aspect, but of a different character from any they have yet beheld. This time the pious explorers are rejoiced to behold none of those "accursed" pyramids,—for so the sailors, seldom choice in their language, are wont to call them. Our explorers are anticipating Pizarro in his discovery of Tumbez. No temples in Panamá. Tumbez.

On they go, still preceding that intrepid dis-

* See a speech made by an Indian to a missionary, who told it again to the author quoted below. "No creas padre, que tomamos la ley de Christo tan inconsideradamente como dizes, porque te hago saber, que estavamos ya tan cansados y descontentos con las cosas que los ydolos nos mandavan, que aviamos tratado de dexarlos, y tomar otra ley." — Acosta, *Hist. Nat. y Moral de las Indias*, lib. 5, cap. 22.


NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN.
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN.
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN.
Apalache
FLORIDA
Gulf of Mexico
Vera Cruz.
Campeche Bay
Yucatan
Cuba
Hispaniola
Honduras Bay
NEW SPAIN
Mexico
Acapulco
NICARAGUA
Lake Nicaragua
Panama
Darien
St. Martha
Venezuela
Maracapana
Cumana
C. Triste
Araya
Paria
Trinidad.
Str. of the Serpent
R. Essequibo
R. Amazon
Tumbez
PERU
Pachacamac
BRAZIL
PARAGUAY
CHILI
LA PLATA
Cordilleras
PATAGONIA
C. Las Once Mil Virgines
Str. of Magellan
VOYAGE
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coverer, along a coast thickly inhabited, and adorned with what wise men would most desire to see in a new country, magnificent roads. The expedition, mindful of its chief intent, still seeks to ascertain the religion of the natives; and in the distance the mariners think they can discern rites round a funeral pile, which remind the travelled amongst them of the burning of widows and the slaying of slaves, as practised by the natives of the Eastern Indies.

City and temple of Pachacamác.

At last they approach the sacred city and temple of Pachacamác, more ancient than anything they have seen; and the boldest of the crew, penetrating by night into its filthy courts, happily find reason to doubt whether these dread precincts have ever been stained by human blood, and whether it is not the great centre of wizardry in the New World, whence oracles proceed, more mysterious than those of ancient Delphi. Here, too, they discover signs of an established priesthood, and of mysterious virgins dedicated to the Sun.

Strange resemblances again.

The same thing, which had filled the hearts of many of our devout explorers with mixed feelings of admiration and disgust in Mexico, was visible also in Peru. They found, for instance, in the feast called Râyme, something which forcibly reminded them of the administration of the Holy Communion*—if, as the pious

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* "Las Mamaconas del Sol, que eran como monjas del Sol, hacian unos bollos pequeños de harina de mayz teñida y amasada en sangre sacada de carneros blancos, los quales aquel dia sa-

Book IX. Ch. 5.

narrators would afterwards have said, and as the missionaries did say, "it is permitted to use such a word of so diabolic a thing."*

Again they steer southwards, and again, as in the beginning of their voyage, they coast along a land where there are no temples, and no idols, and no signs of human sacrifice; and, our mariners having discovered by this time, that where the gods are held to be least cruel, men are found to be most kind, land and penetrate into the country of the undaunted Araucans. Here, to their amazement, they discover a people, who are without God and without law, though some wondrous angel or prophet, called Eponamon, is appealed to by incantations, and invoked to aid them in all their difficult affairs. Here, too, is a priesthood such as poets dream of in the golden ages, who, holding to neither God nor law, nor counting any sinfulness in sins, yet keep a life of abstinence and restraint, and exhort the common people, solely from the love of wisdom; reposing not on the services, but on the honours offered to them by those who

Araucana.

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crificavan. Luego mandavan entrar los forasteros de todas las provincias, y poníanse en órden, y los Sacerdotes que eran de cierto linaje decendientes de Lluquiyupángui, davan á cada uno un bocado." — Acosta, *Hist. Natural y Moral de las Indias*, lib. 5, cap. 23. See also cap. 27, in which occurs the following passage:—"Me mostró un Sacerdote honrado una informacion, que yo la tuve harto tiempo en mi poder, en que avia averiguado de cierta Guaca, ó adoratorio, donde los Indios professavan adorar á Tangatánga, que era un ydolo, que dezian que en uno eran tres, y en tres uno."

* "Si se sufre usar deste vocablo en cosa tan diabólica."— Acosta, lib. 5, cap. 23.

discern their wisdom, and profit by their counsels.* Book IX. Ch. 5.

Such was the view which the voyagers of the "Santa Flor," in common with the early Spanish conquerors (not conquerors, however, in this case) took of the religious opinions of that strange indomitable people, the Araucans. Future inquirers have learnt more about the Araucans, and have found that they possessed a theology; but, still, some of the main impressions naturally made upon hasty passers-by, like the voyagers in the "Santa Flor," are strangely confirmed.

Religion of the Araucans.

The religion of the Araucans was a kind of Manichæism, with a Good Power and an Evil Power. There were also inferior divinities, amongst whom was this "Eponamon," the god of war. Then, there were genii and nymphs, who presided over human affairs, and who were on the side of the Good Power. No Araucan was so poor in spiritual things, as not to have one of these heavenly nymphs to watch over

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* "Algunos destos son predicadores
Tenidos en sagrada reverencia,
Que solo se mantienen de loores,
Y guardan vida estrecha y abstinencia:
Estos son los que ponen en errores
Al liviano comun con su eloqüencia;
Teniendo por tan cierta su locura,
Como nos la Evangélica Escritura.
Y estos que guardan órden algo estrecha
No tienen ley, ni Dios, ni que hay pecados;
Mas solo aquel vivir les aprovecha
De ser por sabios hombres reputados."

—*La Araucana de* Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, canto I.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

him; and when an Araucan came prosperously out of any affair, he was wont to say, "I, too, have my nymph."*

Religion of the Araucans.

But as the Araucans were an eminently free people, and as none of their caciques, whom they call "Ulmenes," were allowed to inflict any kind of injury upon their subjects, so they thought, much less ought the celestial chiefs to injure mortals, or to demand anything for their necessities. On that account, they had no temples, nor idols, nor priests, though, on rare occasions, they sacrificed animals, and burnt tobacco in honour of their deities.†

Divination, however, took the place of divinity, and such things as dreams and the flight of birds were matters of important observation.

That curious fact, set down by the voyagers of the "Santa Flor," that the Araucans held that there was no sinfulness in sins, is verified, at least partially, by modern research, which shows that, though some Araucans believe in a Heaven and a Hell, there are others who believe only in a

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* "No hay algun Araucano que no se alabe de tener una á su servicio. *Nien cai ñi Amchimalghen:* yo tengo aun mi ninfa, dicen, quando salen bien en qualquier negocio."—Juan Ignacio Molina, *Compendio de la Hist. Civil del Reyno de Chile*, lib. 2, cap. 5.

† "Reglados por este extraño principio, no les prestan ningun culto exterior. No tienen templos, ni ídolos, ni sacerdotes, ni acostumbran ofrecer algun sacrificio, fuera del caso de qualquiera grave enfermedad, ó quando hacen la paz, como queda dicho: entonces sacrifican animales, y queman tabaco, que creen es el incienso mas grato á sus Númenes." — Molina, *Reyno de Chile*, lib. 2, cap. 5.

The Araucans have shown the utmost tolerance to the missionaries who have sought to introduce Christianity amongst them, but few of them have been converted.

Heaven, and maintain that mundane actions have no influence upon the future state of man.* Book IX. Ch. 5.

It appears probable that our voyagers and the early Spaniards were right in supposing that there was a certain class of wise or thoughtful men amongst the Araucans; for, in modern times, it is noticed that they have their philosophers, who despise the divinations and superstitions of their countrymen.†

I have thought it worth while to interrupt the voyage of the "Santa Flor," in order to correct and verify the Spaniards' first impressions of this most interesting people, a study of whose laws and customs may yet throw much light upon American history.

Leaving with regret the hospitable coast of Araucana, our voyagers now coast along a more fearful country than they had yet seen, encountering men of larger stature, clothed in the skins of beasts, and of fiercer nature than the inhabitants of the warm regions they had hitherto traversed. In a land where life is with difficulty maintained, temples rise but slowly. Such buildings, therefore, might not have been visible, and yet some distinct creed be firmly held; but amidst this Patagonia.

* "Otros por lo contrario, son de opinion que todos los muertos gozarán allí indistintamente placeres eternos, pretendiendo que las acciones mundanas no tengan ningun influxo sobre el estado futuro." — Molina, *Reyno de Chile*, lib. 2, cap. 5.

† "Hay entre ellos algunos filósofos natos, que desprecian semejantes patrañas, y se burlan de la necedad de sus compatriotas." — Molina, *Reyno de Chile*, lib. 2, cap. 5.

Book IX. Ch. 5.

Patagonian race no rites whatever were to be discerned.*

Straits of Magellan.

The bold Magellan had not yet shown the world the way through the straits which now bear his name, but our religious explorers, anticipating his discovery, have no fear of being detained in these inhospitable regions, or of not finding their way from the mild Pacific to the capricious Atlantic.

Passing through the straits, which connect these two great oceans, by the Cape of *Las Once Mil Virgines*, they coast along a dreary shore resembling that which they had lately traversed, save that the dreariness in this case is of a flat coast instead of a mountainous one. Neither on this flat coast, however, does anything rise up against the horizon which seems like a religious building; nor, on landing, can there be discovered amongst the natives any semblance of religion, except some traces of a belief in evil spirits.† No long delay is made in these inhospitable regions; and soon the "Santa Flor" coasts along a land which has been well described as an irrigated and enclosed garden, the smiling La Plata.‡ Here they find cultivated fields and a

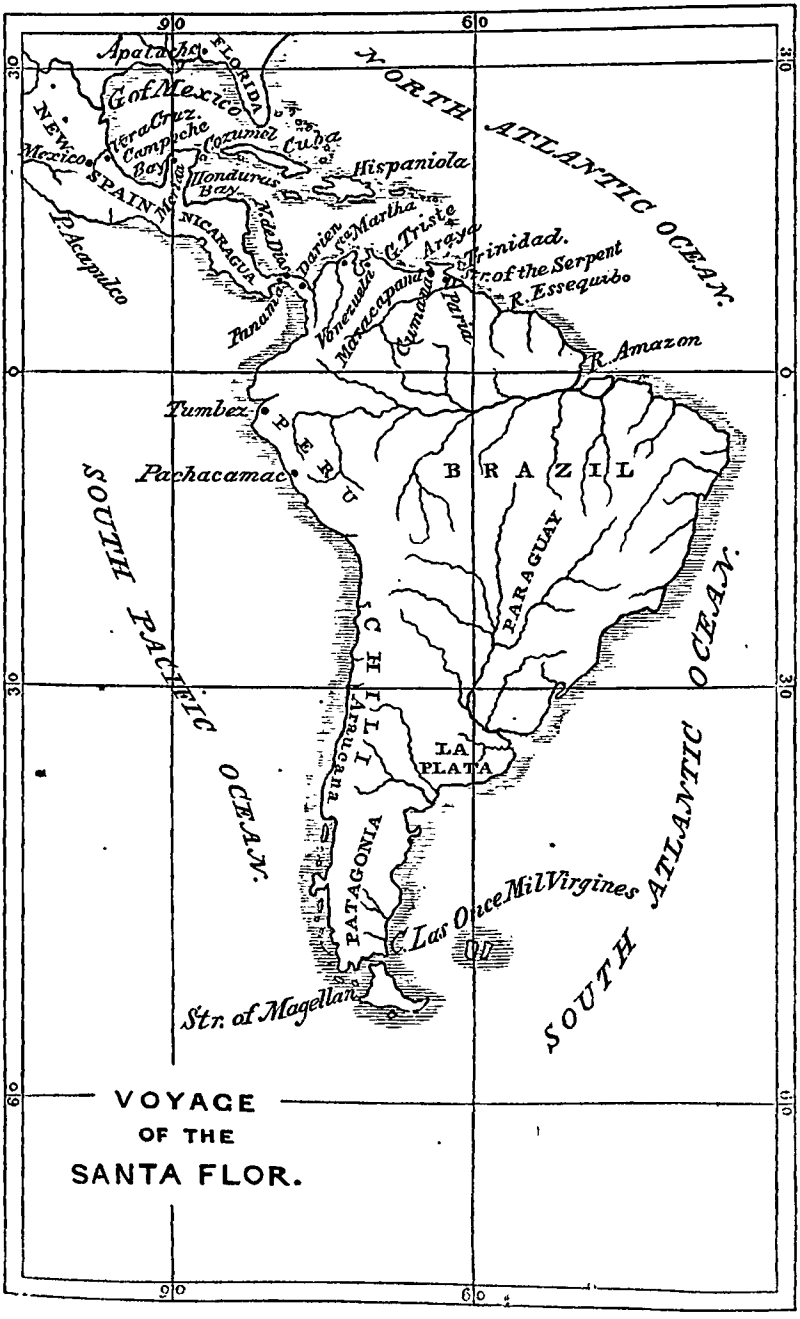
No temples.

* "Gens hæc admodum barbara est, nam præterquam quod crudis, etiam humanis carnibus, vescantur, ne scintillam quidem religionis aut politici regiminis obtineant."—De Laet, *Novus Orbis*, lib. 13, cap. 14.

† "Par che la lor teologia non cognosca che il Diavolo. Dicono che, quandó uno muore, compajono dieci o dodici demoni ballando e cantando, uno dé quali, maggiore essendo degli altri, fa maggior tripudio."—Antonio Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio intorno al Globo terracqueo*, lib. 1, p. 32.

Pigafetta accompanied the celebrated Magellan.

‡ "Quem non oblectet amœ-


NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN.
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN.
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN.
Gof Mexico
FLORIDA
Apalachie
NEW Mexico
SPAIN
Hera Cruz.
Campeche
Bay
Cozumel
Cuba
Hispaniola
Honduras Bay
NICARAGUA
Darien
St Martha
Caracas
Trinidad.
Prof the Serpent
R. Essequibo
R. Amazon
Panama
Venezuela
Maracapana
Cumana
Paria
P. Acapulco
Tumbez
PERU
Pachacamac
BRAZIL
PARAGUAY
CHILI
LA PLATA
PATAGONIA
Las Once Mil Virgines
Str. of Magellan
VOYAGE
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Book IX. Ch. 5. La Plata.

country rich in all things, but inhabited by a fierce people, with no more knowledge of religion* than their neighbours, the Patagonians; and these fierce men would have laughed with wild scorn, if they had been told that, in a few generations, their descendants were to be under the mild sway of unarmed monks, and that the missions of Paraguay† were to be celebrated all over the world.

No missions yet of Paraguay.

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nissimus hujus provinciæ aspectus; quando (haud aliter atque irriguus hortus muro clauditur) ingentibus excelsisque undique rupibus septa, innumeris irroratur fluviis."—Wytfliet, *Descript. Ptolem. Augmentum.* "Plata," p. 118.

* In the *Comentarios of* Cabeza de Vaca, the first Governor of La Plata, there is hardly any mention of the religion of the Indians. Once, the idolatry and belief in a demon of the Indians at the Puerto de los Reyes is spoken of in the following manner:—"Dende aquí comiençan estos Indios á tener ídolatría, i adoran Ídolos, que ellos hacen de Madera, í segun informaron al Governador, adelante la Tierra adentro, tienen los Indios Ídolos de Oro, í de Plata, í procuró con buenas palabras apartarles de la Idolatría, diciéndoles, que los quemasen, í quitasen de sí, í creiesen en Dios Verdadero, que era el que havia criado el Cielo, í la Tierra, í á los Hombres, í á la Mar, í á los Pesces, í á las otras cosas, í que lo que ellos adoraban era el Diablo, que los traìa engañados: í así quemáron muchos de ellos, aunque los Principales de los Indios andaban atemoriçados, diciendo, que los mataria el Diablo, que se mostraba mui enojado: í luego que se hiço la Iglesia, í se dixo Misa, el Diablo huió de allí, í los Indios andaban asegurados, sin temor."—Cap. 54.—Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 1.

† Of the state of religion amongst the Guaranis of Paraguay, we have an account from very good authority, being that of one of the Jesuit fathers, a man apparently of much intelligence and great benevolence, who was engaged in what he justly denominates the "spiritual conquest of Paraguay."

He states that these Guaranis believed in one God, and had no idols; although they venerated the bones of some men who had been great magicians amongst them.

The word for God in their language was compounded of two words: the first signifying wonder; the second, interrogation. "Wonderful! who shall declare it?" appears to be the translation of the word Túpa.

"To the true God," Father Ruiz says, "they never made

Book IX. Ch. 5. Brazil.

Our mariners, moving northwards, approach the vast and rich country of Brazil. Being now in happier climes, they can give more time and thought to their own religion, and of an evening, especially in threatening weather, they perceive a sacred light aloft, a sign to their pious minds of divine favour and of safety.*

Notemples.

But nothing can they discern on the beautiful shores they wind along, that would show that the barbarians there would have any sympathy with them, should they speak to them about the comforts of religion and the existence of a Deity.†

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any sacrifice, nor more than a simple recognition," which he believes to be a relic of what religion the Apostle St. Thomas (who, according to his fancy, had been in the Indies) had left among them. "Conocieron que avia Dios, y aun en cierto modo su Unidad, y se colige del nombre que le dieron, que es Túpâ. La primera palabra Tú, es admiracion; la segunda Pâ? es interrogacion, y assí corresponde al vocablo Hebreo Manhú, quid est hoc, en singular. Nunca tuvieron ídolos aunque ya iva el demonio imponiéndoles en que venerassen los huessos de algunos Indios, que viviendo fueron famosos Magos (como adelante se verá). Al verdadero Dios nunca hizieron sacrificio, ni tuvieron mas que un simple conocimiento, y tengo para mí, que solo esto les quedó de la predicacion del Apóstol Santo Tomé, que como veremos los anunció los misterios divinos."—*Conquista Espiritual hecha por los Religiosos de la Compañía de Jesus, en las Provincias del Paraguay, Parana, Uruguay, y Tape. Escrita por el* Padre Antonio Ruiz *de la misma Compañía.* Madrid, 1639. Ritos de los Indios Guaranis, sec. 10, p. 13.

* "Nelle borrasche molte volte ci apparve il *Corpo Santo,* cioè Sant 'Elmo; e in una procella fra le altre; che soffrimmo in notte oscurissima, mostrossi in cima alla gabbia maggiore d'uno splendor tale, che pareva una facella ardente, e vi stette più di due ore; il che ci era di sì gran conforto, che ne piangevamo di consolazione: quando volle partir da noi gettò sì vivo splendore negli occhi nostri, che per mezzo quarto d'ora rimanemmo come ciechi, gridando misericordia, perchè ci credevamo perduti, ma il mar tosto si acchetò."—Pigafetta, *Primo Viaggio,* l. 1, p. 13.

† "No adoran cosa alguna, ni creen que ay otra vida con gloria

Book IX. Ch. 5. Brazil.

The more curious and enterprizing amongst the voyagers, who land sometimes on these shores, may have discerned something like a trace of religion in what appears to have been a morning exhortation, made by some venerable old man to those who lived with him in the large hut, or barn, in which many families were wont to live together on that part of this coast.* But by the general body of the explorers the Brazilians are pronounced to have little more religion than the trees from which that country takes its name.

These conclusions, however, of our religious mariners must not be taken for more than first impressions. Could they have lingered on the coast, and learnt the language, they might have found rites and ceremonies and superstitions, which would at least have led them to conclude that these so-called savages were not altogether devoid of religious feelings. But the Spaniard, himself a man whose religion was manifested in some way or other many times in the course of a day, too readily concluded that other people

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para los buenos, y pena para los malos, sino que todo se acaba en esta, y las almas con los cuerpos fenecen: y assí viven bestialmente, sin razon, cuenta, peso, ni medida." —Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 4, lib. 8, cap. 13.

* "Nullâ deorum cognitione ducuntur; orientem tamen solem venerantur, et animarum immortalitatem credunt. Manè cum surgunt ex xylinis illis suis retinaculis, antequam cibum capiant, unus ex familiæ aut horrei illius senioribus, magnis passibus inambulans, sæpiusque idem (propter mapalium longitudinem) repetens, amorem tantum conjugum, et adversus hostes vindictæ cupidum, fortemque, ac tenacem animum, concionabundus inculcat."—Wytfliet, *Descript. Ptol. Augmentum*, p. 124.

had no religion at all, if he perceived no signs of it during the short time which the vessel lingered at any particular part of the coast. Perhaps he did not think he was witnessing a religious ceremony, when, in some clear spot in the forest, made bright by the reflection of the light from flowers* (what a picture of tropical vegetation!), he beheld the dusky figures of men advance and recede in measured movements.

Religious dances.

Had our mariners gone up the Amazon, for instance, which, from its first discoverer, ought rather to have had the melodious name of Orellana, they would have found the powers of nature deified, and, as might be expected in that river-abounding country, a river-god, with a symbol of a fish in his hand.†

Amazon river.

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* "Sometimes you traverse open spots where a stronger light is reflected from the flowery ground, or from the shining leaves of the neighbouring high trees; sometimes you enter a cool shady bower. Here a thick wreath of paullineæ, securidacæ, mikanias, passion-flowers, adorned with an incredible number of flowers, climb through the crowns of the celtis." — Spix and Martius, *Travels in Brazil*, v. 1, l. 2, c. 2.

† "They had idols of their own making, each distinguished by some fit symbol, as the God of the River, by a fish in his hand: another was supposed to preside over their seeds and harvests: a third to be the giver of victory. No ceremonies of adoration were in use: the idols lay neglected in a corner, till they were wanted for seed time, or fishing, or war. Idolaters are always disposed to add to the number of their divinities. A chief who entertained Teixeira on his way was greatly impressed with the power of the Portuguese gods, because they had preserved the flotilla during so long a voyage, and he besought the Commander to leave him one, who might protect him and his people, and succour them in their need. Another Indian, who, avowing his contempt for idols, had set himself up as an object of worship, was invited by the Portuguese to the knowledge of the true God. He came at their request, to be instructed, but when he found that their god was not visible, returned unpersuaded, and continued his claims to adoration, either in in-

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Essequibo.

But for such enterprizes time would not have been spared, and the expedition must pass on to the unhealthy coast of Essequibo, where they would find nothing but a religion of fear, and a demon worshipped in order to appease him.*

Caribs.

They are now approaching the term of their voyage, but before they reach the island of Trinidad and the coast of Paria, they notice that strange but brave race of Caribs who build their habitations in trees, and amidst their marshes are indomitable. But no sign of a temple, or of religious rites, is here; and it is with a melancholy satisfaction that the explorers see the three conical hills in Trinidad, which rejoiced the weary eyes of the great Admiral, when he first beheld land in his third voyage, and thus found a mysterious sanction for the resolve which he had entertained throughout his voyage, of naming after the Trinity the first land he should behold.

Voyage ended.

The voyage is now, practically speaking, ended,† as there remains only the accustomed

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sanity, or fraud."—Southey's *History of Brazil*, vol. 1, ch. 18.

* "Dæmonem tantummodo venerantur, non quod malum esse ignorent, sed ne illis malum duat (induat?)" — De Laet, *Novus Orbis*, lib. 17, cap. 17.

† The "Santa Flor" would certainly have needed refitting, and the mariners rest; else, had they continued their voyage across the Gulf of Mexico, and then round the coast of Florida, they would have made their survey more perfect, though they would only have discovered a state of things, in respect to religion, exactly parallel to that which they had already seen in so many latitudes. Cabeça de Vaca, who lived for years amongst the natives in Florida, and traversed the country from Apalache to California, found no sacrifices and no idols, and a people ready for a rapid conversion to Christianity. "Dos mil Leguas que anduvimos por Tierra, í por la Mar en las Barcas, í otros diez Meses que despues de salidos de Captivos, sin

route from Trinidad to Cadiz to be traversed, and no religion to be contemplated by the explorers but their own,—in which, however, the recent "heresies" of Martin Luther might give some little scope for contemplation. But men are not fond of considering what is very familiar to them, and we may venture to assume that, in such an expedition, the creed of the explorers would have been the last thing regarded critically by them, unless, as a just cause for rejoicing at the contrast between their own Faith and the barbarous creeds which they had for so long a time been observing.

Any common origin for the religions of the New World?

Once more at home, and pondering what they had seen, they are at a loss to decide whether these religions of the New World proceed from the corruption and decadence of one religion that grew up in that country ages ago, and once was great in it,—or whether they are the gradual growth of a new religion, seen in different stages of advancement,—or whether they proceed from the partial oblivion of an old religion brought from an old country, what little was remembered being mingled with the growth of a new natural religion, varying in each sweep of the coast according to the peculiar circumstances of the tribe amongst which it was growing to maturity.

The whole subject well merits the largest and profoundest inquiry; and the laws of thought, which create and modify natural religion, might

parar anduvimos por la Tierra, no hállamos Sacrificios, ni Idolatría." — *Naufragios de* Alvar Nuñez Cabeça de Vaca *en la Florida*, cap. 36.—Barcia, *Historiadores*, v. 1.

Book IX. Ch. 5. perhaps be more easily discovered from a consideration of all that was noticed in the discovery of the New World, than from any other body of evidence which exists on that subject, gathered from the religions of the rest of the world.

The curious observer of human nature might here see how the shrewd and strong man imposes upon the credulity of the simple beings around him, till he becomes the wizard of his tribe,—and a kind of witchcraft, their religion: how the hero is honoured by those he has served and succoured, until they worship him almost as a god, and when he dies, give up to him the life-blood of those who were dearest to him, and whom he would have died to serve: how the king, a descendant probably of this hero, though perhaps a very unworthy one, is honoured in the same way as his great ancestor, until royal obsequies drink up rivers of human blood.

How a cruel idol is set up.

The same observer will notice, not without a sad smile on his countenance, how that which was fluent and occasional becomes fixed, formal, and established; for the savage and the semi-civilized man are essentially conservative; and the cruelty which has once, on some great occasion, been committed in honour of the gods, or the heroes, or the wise men, must never more be pretermitted for fear of their avenging wrath.

And fully established.

And this avenging wrath, how natural, from all they saw around them, to imagine its existence! Looking at this world, at the terrors and difficulties within a man and without him, beholding the fierceness of Nature, for she has a

fierce aspect, and not fiercer anywhere than in the New World, what more natural to suppose, than that there were cruel beings to appease, and then what more inevitable than that men should offer up to these beings the most beautiful and noblest creature in creation, their fellow-man.*

The gloomy cleft of superstition once entered, how hard to retrace the steps! One wise man, or one hero (alas, how little understood!) is the cause of introducing a cruel, a barbarous, or a silly rite. How many heroes and how many wise men must battle for ages to subdue that one small item of superstition! For all the dread past is summoned up against them; and whatever is dark, fierce, stupid, or intolerant, in the minds of their fellow-men of the present generation, comes forth to fight against the few wise and heroic men, if any such there be, who discern the magnitude of the superstition.

In considering the Conquest of the Indies, we see that there was urgent need of the presence of some greater beings than the natives, who should cancel the past for them, and lift these savages out of their homicidal ways. Accordingly, the Spaniards—themselves not the least stern and fanatical of men—appeared upon the scene.

* Human sacrifices, though very horrible, are not by any means the most cruel things that are done under the sun, being full of motive. Considering what we know of each other's sufferings, how the most prosperous life is thick with concealed disaster and disappointment, no more to be relied upon than the smooth surface of the sea near a rocky coast, how any man can needlessly molest another is astonishing; but nothing is to be wondered at when the logical faculty is once fairly applied to the service of superstition, or of resentment.

CHAPTER VI.

LAS CASAS AS A COLONIST—OCAMPO'S EXPEDITION.

Religion at Cumaná.

RETURNING to the religion of the inhabitants of the coast of Cumaná, with whom this history has at present most concern, it was no other than it appeared to the voyagers in the "Santa Flor"—namely, a religion of the simplest kind, where the priesthood is not established, where the civil government does not claim in any way the power of a priesthood, and where the religion is little better than a course of small superstitious observances, conjoined with a belief in witchcraft.

For a characteristic manifestation of the religious feeling of these tribes, the way in which they received the coming of an eclipse may be taken. They supposed it to be a sign of the anger of the sun and moon at their idleness, or ingratitude. On the appearance, therefore, of the eclipse, a sudden and wondrous activity pervaded the Indian villages of that coast. The warriors sounded their musical instruments of war, and couched their lances to demonstrate their valour and their resolution to defend the gods in the field of battle. The husbandmen

began to busy themselves in digging and cutting wood. The women cast maize and reeds into the air, uttering lamentations and confessing aloud their indolence and their objection to labour. This sudden demonstration of activity was undertaken, distinctly in the hope of appeasing the anger which, they said, the moon on these occasions meant to show, on account of their feeble ways of proceeding, and of their inveterate idleness.* When the eclipse was over, they were "very contented in having appeased their god with these feigned promises and vain offerings; and they concluded the unwelcome labour of the day by a dance, which ended in a bout of drunkenness, being their ordinary way of winding up their festivals."†

Eclipse brings penitence.

That practice which seems so unaccountable, if it be once seriously thought upon, of worshipping some of the lower animals, was not unknown on the coast of Cumaná; and their treatment of toads may be mentioned as a curious and ludicrous instance of that kind of superstition. They held the toad to be, as they said, "the lord of the waters," and therefore they were very compassionate with it, and dreaded by any accident to kill a toad, though, as has been found

* "Unos tocan instrumentos bélicos, y alistan sus armas en demostracion de su valentía, y prevencion para defenderlos en campal batalla. Otros echan mano á las herramientas, cortan leña, y hacen otros exercicios, y faginas (*qy., faénas*) laboriosas, para aplacar el enojo, que dicen muestra la Luna por su floxedad, y desidia."—Antonio Caulin, *Historia Corográphica Natural y Evangélica de la Nueva Andalucía*, lib. 1, cap. 13.

† Caulin, lib. 1, cap. 13.

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the case with other idolaters, they were ready, in times of difficulty, to compel a favourable hearing from their pretended deities; for they were known to keep these toads with care under an earthen vessel, and to whip them with little switches, when there was a scarcity of provisions and a want of rain.* Another superstition worthy of note was, that when they hunted down any game, before killing it, they were wont to open its mouth and introduce some drops of maize wine, in order that its soul, which they judged to be the same as that of men, might give notice to the rest of its species of the good entertainment which it had met with, and thus lead them to think that, if they came too, they would participate in this kindly treatment.†

Superstition in Nueva Andalucia.

I mention these vain and trifling superstitions with a view of showing the low state of religious intelligence amongst the inhabitants of that coast, which corresponds with their general simplicity in other matters.

Having prepared the way for introducing the departure of Las Casas from Spain to his territory on the Pearl Coast, by narrating the discovery of that coast, and its occupation by the

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* "Se ha experimentado tenerlos con cautela debajo de una olla, y azotarlos con varillas, quando hay escasez, y falta de lluvias." — Caulin, *Hist. de la Nueva Andalucía*, lib. 1, cap. 13.

† "Introducen algunos tragos de ella, para que su alma (que juzgan es como la de los hombres) dé noticia á las demas de su especie el buen recibimiento, que ha tenido, y que los demás que viniesen, participarán de aquel agasajo." — Caulin, *Hist. de la Nueva Andalucía*, lib. 1, c. 13.

Spaniards, together with some account of its primitive inhabitants, their customs and religion, the Clerigo himself may re-appear upon the scene with more hope of his mission being understood, and of his project of colonization meeting with that sympathy from the reader which it so much needed from his contemporaries and fellow-countrymen. Unfortunately, some of the most interesting events to read about are those which were thought very tiresome and very small affairs at the time when they were being transacted.

Now, the object of Las Casas may be understood

Las Casas, having completed his preparations, embarked at San Lucar on the 11th of November, 1520. He took with him some labourers, "humble and simple people, in order that they might respond to the simplicity and gentleness of the Indians;" and his friends furnished him with many little things as presents for the natives. He had a good voyage, and, shaping his course for the West India islands in the first instance, he landed at Porto Rico; where, however, he met with news that must have been as a whirlwind of destruction to his hopes.

He embarks, Nov. 11, 1520.

To understand thoroughly the transaction with which Las Casas was made acquainted on his arrival at Porto Rico, it is necessary to refer back to the proceedings of Pedro de Córdova and the Dominican monks under his charge in Hispaniola. It may be remembered that Pedro de Córdova, on his visit to Spain in 1512, was very kindly received by King Ferdinand, who favoured

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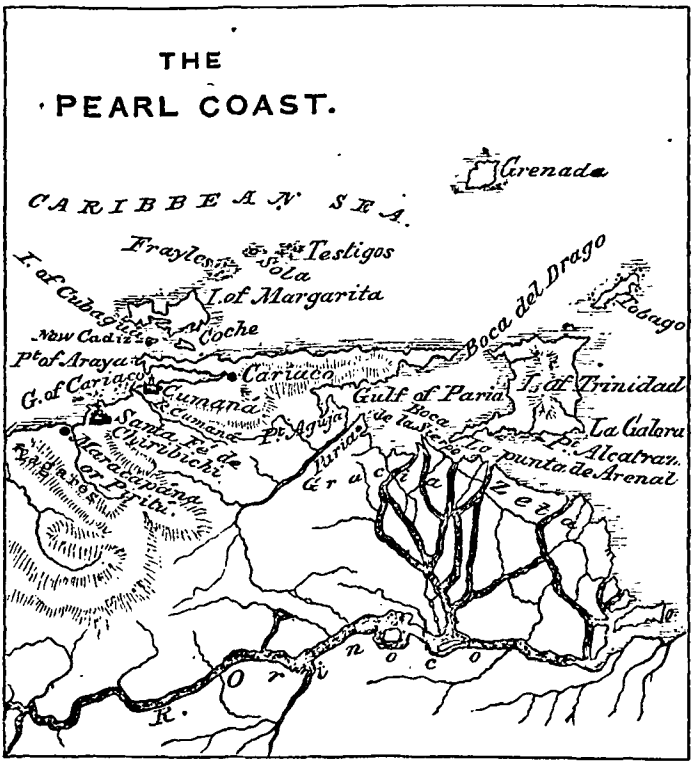
the good Father's anxiety to spread the Catholic Faith in the Terra-firma, and with that view, gave orders that the requisite assistance in the way of outfit should be rendered to Pedro de Córdova by the authorities at St. Domingo. The reader may recollect that he lost no time in



First Dominican establishment on the Terra-firma.

despatching three of his brethren to Cumaná; that two of them, Francisco de Córdova and Juan Garces, had established themselves peaceably on that coast, at Piritú in Maracapána, when some marauding Spaniards landed there, and kid-

napped a Cacique with seventeen of his men; that the neighbouring Indians in retaliation seized upon the Dominican monks, threatening to put them to death if the kidnapped Indians were not brought back within a certain time; that the judges at St. Domingo condemned the kidnapping as illegal, but appropriated the Indians as slaves for themselves; that when the appointed time had expired, the poor monks were put to death by their captors; and that Las Casas had always made this transaction a subject of the loudest complaint. Orders were in consequence given by the authorities that these kidnapped Indians should be returned; but I do not find that they ever were returned, and probably there was little or no trace to be found of them by the time such orders came from Spain.

Its sad fate.

The Dominicans were not at all daunted by this martyrdom of their brethren: we are told that they spoke of them as "fortunate;" and Pedro de Córdova found others of his monks ready and rejoiced to undertake the same mission on the Terra-firma as that in which his own relative Francisco de Córdova and Juan Garces had miserably perished. There was something of adventure and of novelty connected with this form of martyrdom, which must have served to make it attractive. Accordingly, in the year 1518, several monks, Franciscans as well as Dominicans, went to what they called "the Terra-firma," but which may be more precisely described as the Pearl Coast, and founded there

Franciscans and Dominicans on the Pearl Coast. 1518.

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two monasteries.* They were joined by the monks from Picardy, who are spoken of in other parts of this narrative. Certainly, these monastic Orders were wonderfully adapted for some kinds of spiritual labour, as by their means religious men found themselves at once in intimate communication with other religious men all over the globe. That the New World might have its due share of monks as colonists, orders were given either by Cardinal Ximenes, or by the Flemish ministers, early in Charles the Fifth's reign, that each year six Dominicans should be provided with the necessary outfit, and have a free passage from Seville to the Indies. The Jeronimite Fathers also, while they governed, had been industrious in furthering these missions to the mainland; and there was some prospect of one part at least of the Indies, the Pearl Coast, the earthly Paradise of Columbus, being first colonized by *religiosos*, instead of by fierce soldiers, or gainful merchants of men.

Orders of Ximenes.

The two Orders founded their monasteries at some distance from each other. The name of the Dominican monastery was Santa Fé de Chiribichi. It was built without any harassment of the neighbouring Indians, but by the labour of the monks

Santa Fé de Chiribichi.

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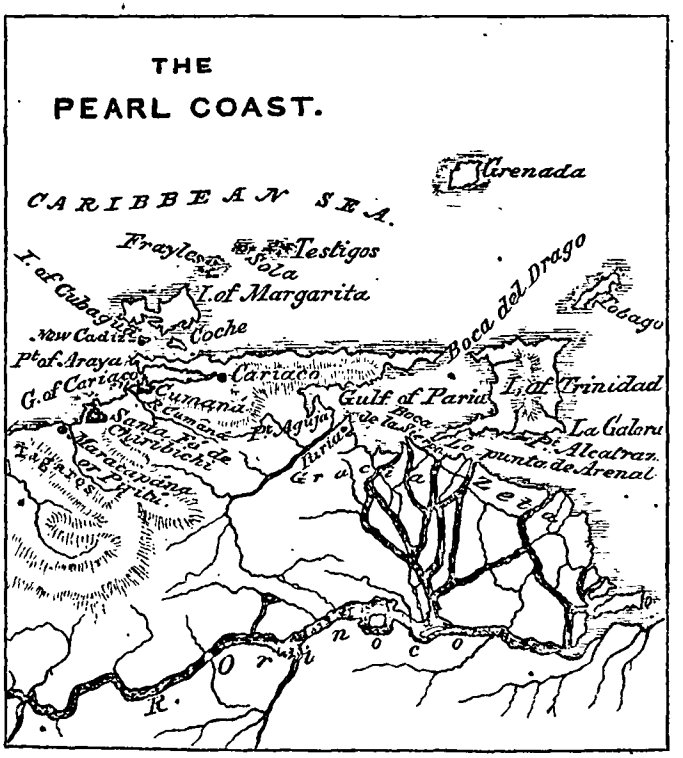
* "Salieron, pues, de la Isla Española algunos Padres Domínicos, y con ellos otros Franciscos, con algunos Religiosos de los que avian venido de Picardía, todos los quales fueron llevados á la Costa de Tierra-firme, adonde cada Religion hizo su asiento, y su monasterio, y con santa, y exemplar vida, atendian á predicar, y á enseñar los Indios, teniendo los Padres Gerónimos, mientras en la Española estuvieron, mucho cuydado en que fuessen proveydos de quanto avian menester."—Herrera, dec. 2, lib. 3, cap. 7.

and of their lay brothers. The Indians received the Fathers kindly; and these, when they had sent away the sailors, remained alone among the natives. The good Fathers seem to have been quite successful in attracting to themselves the kind regards of the Indians; and there they



lived fearlessly enough among these so-called savages, affording by their innocent lives some insight to the Indians of what the Christian religion might be. The general state of the country was so peaceable, that a single Spaniard might safely go into the interior of the

Peaceful state of the Pearl Coast.

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country for three or four leagues with merchandize.*

The chief enemies of the monks seem to have been certain venomous insects, which molested them unceasingly; for in those parts they had no less than three or four kinds of mosquitoes to encounter, "very importunate," which teazed them by day, and others in greater numbers which tormented them by night. Las Casas had been mindful, it is said, of this convent, and had brought with him an order for its increase. Any such establishment would naturally be of the highest importance in promoting his plans; and he had always been on the most friendly terms with the Dominicans, being of the same opinion with them about the freedom of the Indians (*eadem sentiens de republicâ*); which community of opinion, especially in matters of much controversy, is a surer bond even than community of interest. No one, therefore, would have been more delighted than Las Casas to hear that the monastery of Santa Fé had only to contend with venomous insects, the natural product of that soil and that sun.

Unfortunately, however, in the neighbouring

* "Íbase un solo Español cargado de resgates tres y quatro leguas la tierra adentro, y se volvia solo cargado de lo que habia resgatado, y los mismos que esto hicieron me lo afirmaron."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 155.

This is confirmed by Oviedo, the opponent of Las Casas:—"Estuvo la provinçia y tierra que hay desde Paria hasta Unari (que serán çient leguas de costa en la Tierra-Firme), tan paçífica, que un chripstiano ó dos la andaban toda, y tractaban con los indios muy seguramente."—*Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 19, cap. 3.

island of Cubagua, there dwelt "a sinner" (*un pecador de hombre*) of the name of Alonso de Ojeda,—not the companion of Columbus who so boldly and craftily seized on Caonabo, but another of like nature to him—who employed himself in the occupation of pearl-fishing. This young man, of whom Las Casas justly says, that if he had not been born, the world would have lost nothing,* found that he wanted more slaves for his fishery than he possessed. What means so easy as going to the neighbouring coast; ascertaining, or rather declaring, that the inhabitants were cannibals; and then seizing them for slaves! Accordingly, he leagued himself with others like him; and they came over in a caravel to the coast of Chiribichi. The first thing they did was to pay a visit to the Dominican monastery. There happened at the time to be only two of the brethren at the convent, the others having gone to Cubagua to preach and to receive confessions. The Dominicans were delighted to see any of their fellow-countrymen, and welcomed Ojeda most cordially. After dinner he expressed a wish to see the neighbouring Chief, who was accordingly sent for. His name was Maraguay (*la penúltima sílaba lengua*), a man of much ability and some haughtiness, who already was not altogether satisfied with the ways of the Spaniards, but dissembled what he felt, in order that he might retain the monks as sureties for their

Alonso de Ojeda visits the Dominican monastery.

* "Un mancebo que aunque no oviera nascido, no perdiera el mundo nada."—Las Casas, *Hist. Apologética*, MS., cap. 246.

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countrymen.* After the usual greetings, Ojeda asked one of the Dominicans for a sheet of paper and some writing materials, which the Dominican gave him. Ojeda then began to question Maraguay as to whether there were any cannibals in those parts. The Indian Chief answered angrily, "No, no;" and in disgust shortly afterwards took his leave.

Questions Maraguay.

Goes to Maracapána.

Ojeda and his men then quitted the monastery and went four leagues lower down, to Maracapána, a *pueblo* belonging to a Chief called Gil Gonçalez, who received them with the utmost kindness. This Cacique had been in Hispaniola, where he had been well treated by Gil Gonçalez, an official person there, whose name he had taken, probably from the custom, known amongst the Indians, of friends interchanging names as a sign of especial amity. Ojeda, having found the question about cannibals not answered to his liking, by Maraguay, did not ask it of Gonçalez, but accounted for his presence there by another pretext. He wanted, he said, to buy maize of a tribe a little further onwards in the hilly country. The next morning he went to this tribe and bought maize; but found, as he said, that he required fifty men to help him in carrying it to his vessels. These were readily granted to him, and, their hire being agreed upon, they loaded themselves with the maize, and after bringing it to

* "No del todo estaba satisfecho de las costumbres de los Españoles, sino que pasaba y disimulaba con las cosas por tener en la tierra los Frailes como por fiadores de los Christianos."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 155.

the shore, being fatigued with the journey, they laid down to take a *siesta*—and awoke to find themselves attacked by the Spaniards, who succeeded after much slaughter in capturing a good many of the Indians, and carrying them off to the vessels. Whether any of the men captured, or slaughtered, were vassals of Gil Gonçalez, does not appear; but at any rate this Chief resolved to avenge them, and, watching for a disembarkation of Ojeda at another place, the Cacique attacked him, slew him and those that were with him, and, pursuing the caravel in boats, made an effort to capture that too, but failed in his attempt.

Ojeda's man-stealing.

Gil Gonçalez slays Ojeda.

As might be expected, the Indians in Maraguay's country had great suspicions now of the two inmates of the Dominican monastery: especially after having seen that piece of paper given by one of the brethren to Ojeda. Ojeda's intention in asking for it had been to have the answers of the Chief taken down by a notary who was present, which answers were of course to convict the Indians of cannibalism. The monks were entirely innocent of any knowledge of Ojeda's scheme, but now came in for all the odium attached to it.

The monks suspected by the Indians.

A Sunday or two after these transactions had occurred, as the brethren were celebrating mass, a ring at the monastery bell was heard. One of the brethren went to open the door, and was immediately struck down by a fatal blow: and then the Indians entering and going behind the other monk, who was unconscious of the death of his companion, cleaved him down too. Justly,

Murder of the Dominican monks. 1519.

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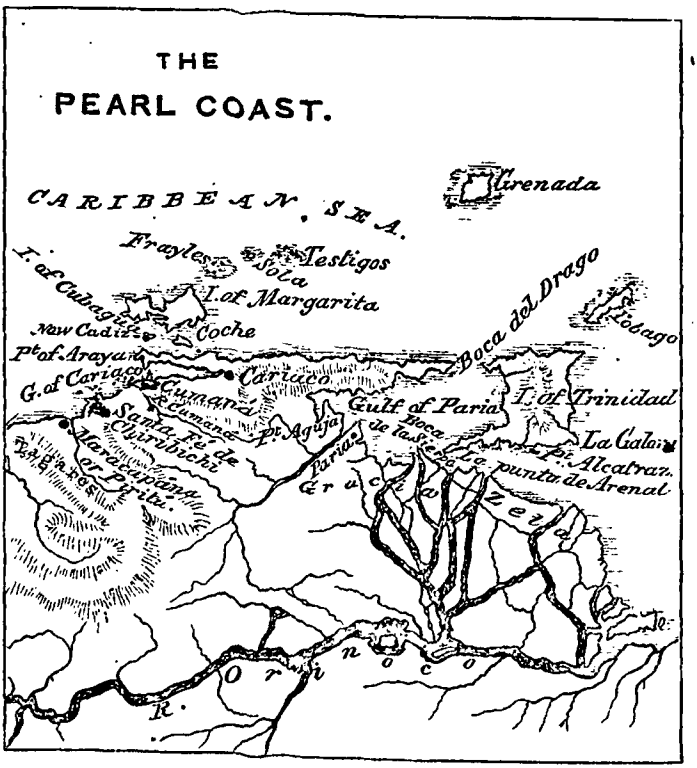
as Las Casas claims for them, may these men be put in the list of martyrs.

The rising of the Indians was not confined to the spot where the injury had been perpetrated, but the revolt fled like a flame along the whole of the Pearl Coast, from Maracapána to Cariaco.



The Franciscan monks at Cumaná fell into the same odium which had come upon the Dominican community at Chiribichi. The Indians hastened to attack the monastery. Two of the brethren were fortunate enough to escape in a boat to Araya, and from thence to Cubagua; but one un-

Franciscan monastery attacked. 1519.

fortunate Franciscan, Father Dionysius, fell into the hands of the insurgents. The Indians debated much as to what they should do with their prisoner, but at last resolved to put him to death, which they did, the poor monk imploring the forgiveness of Heaven for his persecutors, and saying, with truth, "that they knew not what they were doing." The fury of the Indians, once excited, was such, that they did not spare even the live creatures that were found in the monastery down to the cats. Then they pulled down the building, trampled upon the garden, broke the bell, tore the crucifix into bits and threw them out upon the highways, an unconscious act of sacrilege which made the pious Spaniards of Cubagua tremble.* These Cubaguans had other causes for trembling. Their pearl-fishing had brought great gain; they were prosperous; they were rich; many of them were merchants.† They heard that the infuriated Indians, who had already killed eighty Spaniards, were taking to their boats, and intending to attack Cubagua. The Alcalde, Antonio Flores, is accused of being a man of no courage. There were three hundred Spaniards on the island, and such a number might have defied thousands of Indians. There

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Fury of the Indians.

* "Asolaron la Casa, talaron la Huerta, quebraron la Campana, despedaçaron un Crucifijo, í pusiéronlo por los Caminos: cosa que hiço temblar á los Españoles de Cubagua."—Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. 76.—Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

† "Y maldecian hombres y mujeres
La bajeza de aquellos mercaderes."
—Juan de Castellanos, *Varones Ilustres de Indias*, elegía 13, canto 1.

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is one fact, however, which the various writers who have commented upon the Alcalde's conduct, seem to have forgotten; and that is, that there was not a drop of water to be had in any part of that island.* Whether moved by a knowledge of this fact, or by a conviction that his Spaniards were not in sufficient force to resist the numbers that would be brought against them, Antonio Flores put his little colony on board some vessels which were fortunately at Cubagua, and steered straight for St. Domingo, where he arrived to be subjected to much obloquy and blame. These deplorable events took place at the end of the year 1519.

The Spaniards quit Cubagua. 1519.

The Spaniards, in deserting Cubagua, could take but little of their riches with them; and when the Indians poured like a furious wave over the island, they found a great spoil of wine, silks, cloths, and all the goods and merchandize which these wealthy pearl-fishers had gathered round them. Not a Spaniard was left upon Cubagua, or within the wide extent of the Pearl Coast. It was as free from the men of the Old World as when Columbus first caught sight of it twenty-one years before. But how different must be the feelings with which the Spaniards and the Indians would meet again, after all that had occurred within these eventful twenty-one years, from the mild complacency and innocent

No Spaniard left on the Pearl Coast.

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* "La cual aunque es estéril y pequeña,
Sin recurso de rio ni de fuente,
Sin árbol y sin rama para leña
Sino cardos y espinas solamente—."
—Castellanos, *Varones Ilustres de Indias*, eleg. 13, canto 1.

satisfaction which on both sides had characterized their first meeting. If it be of any use to repeat the remark, it may certainly here be noticed, what great mischief, in critical circumstances, any one bad man can do.

The above story, as told by the earliest Spanish historians, is a model of what may be done in the way of prejudice and injustice by judicious, or careless omission. The rising of the Indians is attributed to "their own malice,"* or at most to their objection to being made to work at the pearl-fisheries; whereas, it was the immediate and natural result of the outrage committed upon them by Ojeda.

The authorities at St. Domingo send an expedition to Chiribichi.

When these events at Cubagua and on the Pearl Coast came to the knowledge of the *audiencia* at St. Domingo, they resolved to send an expedition to Chiribichi and its vicinity, to avenge the murder of the monks and the devastation of Cubagua,—and, as a matter of course, to enslave Indians. This expedition was now on its way, and was expected at Porto Rico, when Las Casas arrived there; and this is the news with which he was greeted. We may imagine the dismay that such tidings, appreciated by him in all their consequences, would cause in his mind. Fortunately for himself, he was one of those

* "Vençidos de su propria maliçia."—Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 19, cap. 3. See also Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. 76; Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

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men who find some relief for their misfortunes in their indignation. Moreover, he probably entertained a hope that he would yet be able to prevent the mischief which he foresaw; and, accordingly, when the vessels arrived at Porto Rico, he showed his powers to Ocampo, whom the *audiencia* had entrusted with the command, and endeavoured to detain the expedition. But Ocampo, with all due expressions of civility to Las Casas, said, that he must execute his orders, and that the *audiencia* would bear him harmless. The expedition accordingly sailed on: and Las Casas, after distributing his labourers by threes and fours amongst the inhabitants of Porto Rico, hastened to St. Domingo.

Las Casas seeks to detain Ocampo.

His appearance there was very unwelcome. Indeed, from the exertions he had already made at the court of Spain and elsewhere in favour of the Indians, he was odious to all the Spanish colonists.* He endeavoured to carry things with a high hand, but met with the usual hinderances and vexations that he had endured both at home and abroad from his countrymen in office. They did not dare, however, to oppose him openly, clothed as he was with the King's authority, and having the reputation of being in favour with the all-powerful Flemish ministers. He demanded that a proclamation should be made of the Royal Order which he was the

* "El que muchos no quisieron ver porque ya era por todas estas tierras odioso por saber que pretendia libertar los Indios y librallos de las manos de sus matadores."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 156.

bearer of: namely—that no one should dare to injure or affront any of the natives of those provinces which were within the limits granted to the Clerigo Las Casas. If they did do so, it would be at the peril of the confiscation of all their goods, and even of their lives. This was proclaimed in the usual manner, with sound of trumpet, in the principal streets, the Admiral and all the chief authorities being present.

He then demanded that, with the least possible delay, they should recal their fleet, discontinue the war, and cause their troops to quit the territory which had been given in charge to him. Again, they did not dare to refuse openly, but made answer that they were about to take the matter into consideration: and many days they spent in discourse about it without their coming to any conclusion.

Efforts of Las Casas to counteract Ocampo's expedition.

Meanwhile, a counter attack was very skilfully made by the Clerigo's enemies, which term probably included the whole population of the colony, with the exception of a few private friends, and of the Dominican monks or any other persons in religious orders. There was a certain Biscayan shipwright who had two vessels of his own that were constantly engaged in the Cubaguan slave-trade, for so it may be called. This man no sooner saw Las Casas and knew the business upon which he had come, than, as the Clerigo expresses it, he would sooner have seen the Evil One. Scanning the ship of Las Casas with all the critical dislike of an enemy, the Biscayan pronounced that it was not sea-worthy, and that it could not be made

sea-worthy. Here was a subject for enquiry which the authorities were willing should be investigated without delay. The King's subjects must not be permitted to go in vessels that were not sea-worthy. An examination was made, the hostile shipwright being, according to the Clerigo's recollection, one of the persons appointed to examine. The body thus constituted condemned the vessel, pronouncing it neither fit for navigation, nor capable of being made fit. "All this," as Las Casas declares, "was done to hinder the business of the Clerigo, as being odious to all; for all, both judges and official men, had a share in the business of man-stealing." By the condemnation of his vessel, Las Casas lost what was worth to him 500 pesos of gold, and, what were far more valuable at the present juncture,—time, reputation, and the means of transit.

Meanwhile, Ocampo had reached the port of Maracapána, in the territory of Gil Gonçalez, where the Spaniard took a very crafty method* of securing the chief men of that district. On approaching the coast, Ocampo kept all his men but a few of the sailors, under hatches. The Indians, on hailing the vessels, enquired whence they came, to which the Spaniards answered "Castilla." The Indians shouted out "Hayti, Hayti?" The Spaniards again replied "Castilla, Castilla," and made signs that they had wine and other things from Spain to barter. The Indians, thinking that they had to deal with Spaniards

* "Muy gentil manera," Oviedo calls it.

who did not know of what had happened on that coast, no longer hesitated to enter the vessels and exchange goods. The Cacique himself, more wary than his followers, remained in a boat near to the vessel. But one of the sailors, who was an excellent swimmer, let himself down by a rope, sprung into the Cacique's canoe, plunged with him into the water, and, stabbing him in several places with a dagger, succeeded, with the help of some other sailors, in carrying him to the vessel. At the same time, a signal having been given on board, the concealed Spaniards rushed on deck, and the Indians in the vessel were captured. Gil Gonçalez and the principal chiefs were hung from the yard-arm as an example of terror to the Indians standing on the shore. Amongst these, it is said, was the Cacique of Cumaná. Now Ocampo had on board the wife, or one of the wives, of this Cacique, named Donna Maria, who had been carried by Flores from Cubagua to Hispaniola. The Spanish Commander gave her liberty and set her on shore, and through her means peace was ultimately restored between the Spaniards and the Indians of that coast, but not until Ocampo had thoroughly chastized the latter, and captured many slaves; carrying his incursions, I observe, into that mountainous country, the abode of the Tagares,* where Ojeda had bought

Ocampo's success.

* "Passó á la provinçia de Cumaná é á los *Tagares*, é hizo entradas en la tierra, é prendió muchos indios en diversas veçes, é justiçió á los que le paresçió dellos, y otros mató, quando se defendian por no ser presos."—Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 19, cap. 4.

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his maize and had committed the crime which caused the general rising of the inhabitants of the Pearl Coast.

Las Casas soon learnt by the surest means what was going on in his province of Cumaná, for, while he was endeavouring to adjust matters with the authorities of Hispaniola, Indian slaves were brought to St. Domingo, the first-fruits of Ocampo's campaigning. At this the Clerigo was excessively indignant:—to use his own expressive words—"he went raging, and with terrible sternness bore witness against this thing before the *audiencia*,"* pouring out all manner of threats against them. They thought it better to come to terms with him, and for this purpose they devised a plan which would not only remedy the past, but from which they might hope for some profit in the future. This was to offer to become partners with Las Casas in working out his grant from the King. They sent for him and made their proposition. He listened favourably to their terms; and it was finally agreed that Las Casas should go to the territories assigned to him; and that the expedition which had been sent out under Ocampo should now be placed under the Clerigo's command. Accordingly, two vessels were fitted out for him, and well provisioned. Ocampo's expedition consisted of three hundred men: out of them Las Casas was to

Scheme of the *audiencia*.

Adopted by Las Casas.

* "Viéndolos venir el Padre Clérigo, rabiaba, y con terrible rigor lo detestava delante el Audiencia." — Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 156.

choose a hundred and twenty, who were to be paid wages: the rest were to be sent back.

This agreement between the authorities of St. Domingo and Las Casas took the form of a commercial speculation. There was to be a company, and the venture was to be divided into twenty-four shares. The King was to have six shares in the concern, the Clerigo and his Knights six shares, the Admiral three shares, the Auditors, the Treasurer, the Contador and other official people, each a share. The means of profit were to be found in pearl-fishing, exchanging trifling commodities for gold, and making slaves, which last was a great object, for the following reason. Many of the principal persons in St. Domingo had bands of slaves employed under mayordomos in the pearl fishery at Cubagua; and human life was swiftly exhausted in procuring these diseased productions then so highly valued—the water mines, if we may call them so, being quite as injurious to the delicate Indian as the land ones. A constant supply of slaves on the spot where their services were most valuable, was much to be desired.

Its nature

This last mentioned means of profit was to be provided for in the following manner. Las Casas was to ascertain what Indians in those parts were cannibals, or would not be in amity and converse with the Spaniards, or would not receive the Faith and the preachers of it. Upon his pronouncing against the natives of any province upon either of the above points, these people were to be attacked by the hundred and twenty

men under Ocampo, and were to be made slaves. Anybody who hoped that Las Casas would so pronounce must, as he intimates, have been somewhat mistaken in their man.*

The whole of this business must have been exceedingly distasteful to Las Casas; but he saw no other way of accomplishing any part of his object, and prudently availed himself of this.

Near at hand, there lay on his death-bed the man who, of all others, would have sympathized most with Las Casas in his efforts to civilize and convert the poor Indians of the Terra-firma. This was Pedro de Córdova, who, at the early age of thirty-eight, was now dying of consumption in the monastery of St. Domingo, worn out by the ascetic life he had led. We do not learn whether Las Casas was able to consult "that servant of God," as he always calls him, about the expedition; but, if he had done so, the dying Father could but have given one reply, as anything must have seemed advisable which promised to hinder the outrages which the men in Ocampo's expedition were inflicting upon the natives of the Terra-firma.

Death of Pedro de Córdova.

Pedro de Córdova departed this life in May,

* "Y era tanta su ceguedad, que no advirtieron que habiendo andado cinco ó seis años el Clerigo (como todos sabian) trabajando y muriendo, yendo y viniendo á Castilla á Castilla, (sic in MS.) porque no hiciesen esclavos, y los que tenian hechos los libertasen, aunque fuesen de los Caribes ó que comian carne humana, oyéndole afirmar que hacellos aquellos esclavos era tiranía, que así engañasen á sí mismos, que pensasen que el Clérigo habia de ser causa de aquellas guerras."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 156.

1521. We know, however, that he left one worthy to succeed him in his office, for it is mentioned that Antonio Montesino, already well-known to the readers of this history, preached the funeral sermon on his late prelate, taking for the text, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." This resolute and noble monk, the especial friend of the Indians, no doubt felt as his late prelate would have done about the project of Las Casas. Another motive, too, which would have ensured the concurrence of Pedro de Córdova, Antonio Montesino, or any of the Dominican fraternity in Hispaniola, with the plans of Las Casas was, that in him they were certain of a protector to any monastery they might found again at Chiribichi, to replace the one which had been swept away in the late outbreak of the Indians.

Meanwhile the provisions were put on board the vessels intrusted to Las Casas by the *audiencia* of San Domingo. These provisions consisted of wine, oil, vinegar, and a great quantity of cheese from the Canary Islands. He had orders to go to the island of Mona, and take on board eleven hundred loaves of cassava bread from the King's stores in that island. He was also well provided with sea-stores of all kinds, and articles of merchandize; and, everything being now ready, in July of that year he set sail from San Domingo.

Las Casas sets sail, July, 1521.

Having received his cargo of bread at the island of Mona, he proceeded to Porto Rico for the labourers he had left there. But, as might

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What had become of his followers.

be expected, not a single man of them was to be found; and the Clerigo had not even the comfort of finding that his humble and simple followers had been employed in the cultivation of the earth, or in any good work, but he learnt that they had enlisted with certain freebooters, whose occupation it was to attack and pillage the Indians. It requires a large experience of mankind before it is ascertained that gentle, simple, and ignorant people are not the best persons for keeping their words. It requires some training of the intellect, or discipline of some kind, to make men faithful and true. Had Las Casas been enabled to bring out with him from Spain real knights, men worthy of wearing golden spurs, they might have been true to themselves and to him. Now he was left to prosecute his enterprize without any body of followers especially attached to him.

Reaches the Terra-firma.

Nothing was to be done, however, but to proceed in his voyage to the Terra-firma. When he arrived there, he found, as might have been foreseen, that Ocampo's men were pillaging and making slaves. They were in great want of provisions, as the Indians fled before them: and, without the assistance of the natives, the Spaniards were never able to purvey adequately for themselves.* Ocampo was busy founding a town about half a league above the river Cumaná, which he called Nueva Toledo; but even if

Nueva Toledo founded.

* "Sin ellos nunca los Españoles por todas las Indias se vieron hartos."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 157.

it had been named New Seville, as Las Casas humourously remarks, the men would not have taken to it any the more. On the arrival of the Clerigo, they all resolved to avail themselves of the licence to return which had been granted beforehand for some of them, and to go home, having no fancy to continue with the Clerigo, being weary of the country, and looking upon him as a bad captain for marauding expeditions. So fearful were they of being detained, that they would never come on shore all at once, but took care to leave twenty men, whom they could depend upon, in the ships.

Ocampo's men will not stay with Las Casas.

Furnishing them with provisions for the voyage, Las Casas allowed them to go, but remained himself with a few servants and hired labourers. The polite and witty Ocampo, as might be expected from the feelings that one gentleman would have for another, showed regret at leaving the Clerigo in this deserted state; but was obliged, nevertheless, to take his departure. And now Las Casas, with his great projects, his immense territory, his scanty resources, was indeed alone. Never, perhaps, was there a position which the philanthropic part of mankind would have regarded with more profound concern and more solicitous apprehension.

CHAPTER VII.

LAS CASAS ALONE IN THE LAND—RECEIVED IN THE FRANCISCAN MONASTERY—FATE OF HIS COLONY.

THE Dominican community, to whom of course Las Casas would first have turned, had, as it appears, been entirely swept away. The Franciscans, however, had returned, and they were the sole nucleus of Christianity and of civilization in that immense expanse of country, a seventh part of the whole world. People are often seeking for romance in all kinds of fiction; but how really romantic such a situation as this was! The light from that monastery, the sound of its bell amidst the wilderness of idolatry, what signs of hope they were—which angels might have watched with unspeakable joy, and yet with apprehension! It must have been no little comfort to Las Casas, at this juncture, to find that the Franciscans had already repaired the ruin which had fallen upon them, together with the rest of the Spaniards in that part of the country. These monks must have re-established themselves under Ocampo's protection; and it does not seem as if their monastery could have suffered anything like the devasta-

Franciscan monastery re-established.

tion which had come upon the unfortunate and equally innocent Dominicans.

The Franciscans receive Las Casas.

When the Franciscans heard of the Clerigo's arrival, they came out to meet him with great joy, chanting a *Te Deum*. Their little monastery was on the river-side,* "a cross-bow-shot" from the sea-shore. It was constructed of wood and thatched with straw; and it had a pleasant garden with orange trees, vines, and melons in it. Las Casas built a large storehouse adjoining the monastery, and there he stowed away his goods. The first thing he did, was to convey his message of peace to the Indians, which he accomplished by means of Donna Maria (before mentioned as the wife of the Cacique of Cumaná), who knew something of the Spanish language. Through this woman Las Casas informed the Indians that he had been sent by the new King of Spain, and that henceforth they were to experience nothing but kind treatment and good works from the Christians, as an earnest of which, he sent them some of the presents which he had brought from Castille, to gain their friendship.

He sends a message of peace to the Indians.

The founding of a colony is always one of the most interesting things in the world; and it is surprizing that rich and powerful men in our own times do not more frequently give themselves to such splendid undertakings. But, in this particular case, the interest is doubled, from the feeling that the leader is no mere adventurer and has no private ambition, but is trying a great ex-

* The river Cumaná, now called the Manzanares.

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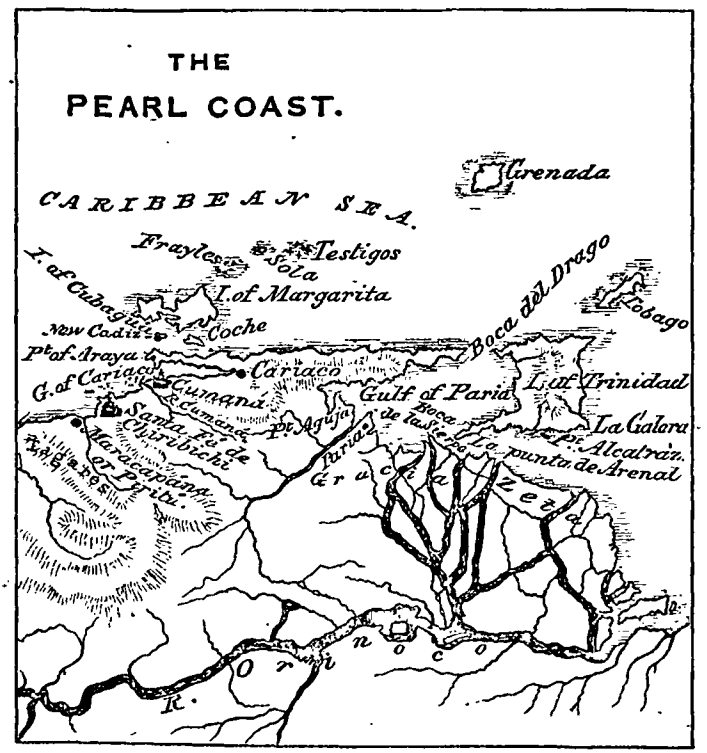
periment for the good of the world. Moreover, one is always curious to see a man in a position which he has long sought for, where he has in some measure to fulfil the day-dreams of his life. The first proceedings of Las Casas seem to have been judicious; and, altogether, though this set-



tlement at Cumaná was but a little one, a mere fragment of the great undertaking which Las Casas had originally designed, still much might have been hoped from it, if there had been no Spaniards near to hinder the good work. Unfortunately, however, there was the island of

Cubagua at a short distance from the coast, and, as there was no fresh water there, the Spaniards, engaged in pearl-fishing near that island, had a motive for coming frequently to the river Cumaná in the main land, which was but seven leagues off.

Spaniards at Cubagua a great detriment.

Las Casas, thinking to have some curb upon these Spaniards, engaged with a master mason at the rate of ten ducats a month, to build a fort at the mouth of the river; but the Spaniards of the island, the "apostles of Cubagua," as Las Casas sarcastically calls them, soon perceived the drift of the Clerigo's building, and the builder was bribed, or persuaded, by them, to desist from his work. The visits, therefore, of the Spaniards to the mainland were as uncontrolled as ever. The Indians had no love for these visitors, but then they brought wine with them, and this won over even those Indians who had most distaste to the Spaniards. And, just as a child cannot handle with any safety the arms of a grown-up man, so there is always danger for a people when, without fit preparation, it comes to use the products of an older state, whether it be strong wine, or a well-compacted political constitution. To obtain this all-seducing wine, which, or the like of which has ever proved the subtlest and most destructive weapon against aborigines, clearing them off as fire consumes the dry herbage of the prairie, the Indians brought gold and slaves to the Spaniards, the slaves being youths and simple persons.

Of the light way in which such simple persons were made slaves among the Mexicans, and

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Light way in which the Indians became slaves among their own people.

probably among these Indians too, we have a curious instance in the letter of Rodrigo de Albornoz to the Emperor in 1525.* He says, that "for very little things and almost in jest they became slaves to one another," and, as an instance, he mentions that when he was once officially examining some slaves, he asked one of them the origin of his slavery,—whether he was the son of slave parents, for instance; and the Indian replied "No, but that one day when they were in the midst of their *areitos*, which is their festival, a man was beating an *ataval*, which they use in their feasts, like those of the Spaniards, and that he wished very much to play upon it, and that the owner would not let him without being paid for it; as he had nothing to give, he said that he would be his slave, and the other let him play the instrument for that one day, and thenceforward he was the other's slave." And Albornoz tells the Monarch, that the existence of such light modes of creating slavery is a thing to be considered "for the sake of Your Majesty's conscience as well as of Your Majesty's service."

But to return to the Cubaguans.—There is no doubt that their frequent communication with the

* "Dijo que no, sino que un dia que ellos estavan en sus areitos, que es su fiesta, tañia uno un ataval que ellos usan en sus fiestas, como los de España í que le tomó gana de tañer en él, í que el dueño no se lo quiso dexar tañer si no se lo pagaba, í como él no tenia que le dar, dixo seria su esclavo, í el otro le dejó tañer aquel dia, í de allí adelante quedó por su esclavo í despues le havia vendido tres ó quatro veces."—*Al* Emperador Carlos 5°. Rodrigo de Albornoz, *en Temistitan á* 15 *de diciembre, de* 1525.—*Coleccion de* Muñoz, MS., tom. 77.

Indians of Cumaná was likely to be fatal to the plans of the Clerigo: and so he felt it to be. Their conduct was a practical denial of his message from the King. He went to Cubagua and made most forcible appeals (*requerimientos terribles*) to the Alcalde there: but all to no effect. The chief monk of the Franciscans, Padre Joan de Garceto, saw the matter in the same light as Las Casas, and urged him to go to St. Domingo and to appeal to the *audiencia*, in order to provide some remedy for the evils arising from the visits of the Cubaguans. Two vessels were lading with salt, and the Clerigo, he said, could go in one of them, which would be ready to sail in a month. Las Casas did not see the need for his going; but the Franciscan Father was very urgent about it. Every day they had mass and prayers for inspiration in this matter, and discoursed upon it after prayers. Father Garceto, with true Flemish perseverance, never swerved from his opinion, or from the same expression of it, winding up the discourse by saying, "It does not appear to me, Sir, but that you have to go and seek a remedy for these evils, in the cessation of which so much is at stake."*

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Las Casas advised to go to St. Domingo.

But Las Casas was naturally very unwilling to leave his territory without the protection, slight as it might be, of his presence; and, besides, though this was a smaller matter, he had

* "No me parece, Señor, sino que vos habeis de ir á buscar el remedio de estos males en cuya cessacion tanto vá."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 157.

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been entrusted with no small amount of merchandize. He accordingly prepared two sets of papers: —one being a memorandum naming Francisco de Soto captain in the Clerigo's absence, and giving him the necessary instructions; and the other being a despatch, in which an appeal was made to the *audiencia* of St. Domingo for protection from the visits of the Spaniards at Cubagua. This course left it open to Las Casas to change his mind at the final moment of the departure of the ships. At last the day came when it must be decided whether Las Casas was to go or not. Mass was said as usual, and the friends afterwards took counsel together as they were accustomed; when Father Garceto pronounced his unvarying opinion—"Sir, you have to go, and by no means to remain."

Father Garceto's pertinacity.

Overcome by this perseverance on the part of the Franciscan, which the Clerigo thought might be an expression of the will of God, he yielded, but still was not convinced. "God knows," he exclaimed, "how much I do this against my judgment and also against my will, but I am willing to do it, since it seems good to your Reverence; and if it be an error, I would rather err upon the opinion of another man, than succeed by taking my own. Wherefore I hope in God that, since I do not do this thing for any other intent than to perform my duty in that which I have undertaken for His service, He will convert even error into advantage." Hereupon we may remark, that a man seldom makes so signal a blunder as when he acts exceptionally,

and contradicts the usual tenour of his life and character. Las Casas was not wont to defer much to other men's opinions, and why he should have given way to this good Franciscan, who knew much less of the world than the Clerigo did, is scarcely explicable, except upon the ground that the Franciscan's arguments were so weak, and his opinion so strong, as to give an appearance of mysterious significance to it, before which a pious man like Las Casas would be more likely to bow than to a well-connected train of reasoning. However, the decision was now arrived at, and he set sail in the salt-carrying vessel bound for St. Domingo, having parted from the Franciscan monks with great grief on their part, and he not being a man, as he well says, alluding to his affectionate disposition, to feel less grief on his part.*

Las Casas quits his colony.

Las Casas was not fortunate, perhaps not wise, in his choice of agents. Francisco de Soto was a good and prudent man, but poor; and the Clerigo assigns to this poverty all the evils which De Soto was the cause of. The first thing after the departure of Las Casas that Francisco de Soto did, notwithstanding the express written orders (a copy of which orders De Soto had signed) of his master to the contrary, was to send away the only two boats the little colony had, to traffic for pearls, gold, and even for slaves, as

De Soto disobedient.

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* "Así se partió con harto dolor de los Frailes, no siendo el que él llevaba menos." — Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 157.

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some believe. Now the Clerigo, aware to some extent of the temper of the Indians, had given orders to De Soto, not on any account to send away these boats, so that if he should perceive symptoms of hostility in the Indians, he might be able to embark the men and goods in these boats, or the men at least, if there were not time to embark the goods, and thus to save the little colony. One of these boats was fitted with sails; the other was a Moorish rowing-boat with many oars, which the Indians in their language called "the centipede," and of which they were much afraid.

The Indians had not had time to appreciate the motives or the purposes of Las Casas. Nothing but evil had hitherto come to them from converse with the Spaniards. The pearl-fishers of Cubagua had not ceased to molest the natives of Cumaná; and now, whether moved by former, yet recent, injuries, or by new insults received after the Clerigo's departure; or whether, as he also conjectures, they were by the decrees of Providence not destined to receive the blessings of the gospel, they resolved to make an onslaught upon the settlement. Twelve days had not elapsed since Las Casas had sailed, before the Franciscan brotherhood discerned the symptoms of coming danger; and they asked Donna Maria whether their suspicions were just or not, to which, as some of her countrymen were present, who might make out something of the conversation, she replied with her voice "No," but with her eyes she said "Yes."

Symptoms of danger from the natives.

At this point of time a Spanish vessel touched at the coast, and the servants of the Clerigo begged to be taken on board; but, whether from fear or malice, the masters of the vessel would not listen to the request; and the little colony was left to its fate.

The poor Franciscan monks and the Clerigo's lieutenant roamed about now in all the agony of fear and indecision, endeavouring to find out, by going from one Indian hut to another, when the blow was to take place. On the fourteenth day after the departure of Las Casas, they discovered that the attack was to be made on the following morning; and then at last they resolved to fortify the monastery and the adjoining store-house. With that purpose they placed round the building the twelve or fourteen guns which they possessed; but on examination they found at this critical juncture that their powder was damp.

The Spaniards take measures for defence.

Early on the ensuing morning (this was now the third day after warning had come to them from the eyes of the kind-hearted Indian woman), and while they were drying their powder in the sun, the Indians with a terrible war-whoop rushed down upon them. Two or three of the Clerigo's servants were killed at the first onset: the rest, with the Franciscans, made good the entrance to the monastery. The Indians, however, succeeded in setting it on fire. But fortunately, there was a postern door that led into the enclosed garden before mentioned, which was surrounded by a hedge of canes. Another door

The Indians attack them.

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from the garden led out upon the bank of the river. At the moment of attack Francisco de Soto happened to be in the Indian *pueblo* of Cumaná, which was situated on the sea shore, a very short distance from the monastery. As soon as he perceived what was going on, he fled to the monastery, but in his flight was wounded by a poisoned arrow. He succeeded, however, in making his way into the garden with the other Spaniards. At the distance of a "stone's-throw" there was a little creek, where the monks had a canoe of their own which would hold fifty persons. They gained this canoe, and pushed off down the river, while the Indians thought they were being burnt in the monastery. The number of persons in the canoe was about fifteen, or twenty, including all of Las Casas's servants and all the Franciscan monks, with the exception of one lay-brother, who at the first war-whoop of the Indians had fled, and thrown himself into a bed of canes. He now made his appearance high up upon the bank: his friends in the boat did their utmost to get to the place where he was, but the stream was very strong against them. He, poor man, very nobly made signs to them, not to attempt to return; and they left him to his fate. All this must have taken some time, and the Indians now caught sight of the boat. Instantly they manned a light boat of their own, lighter than the canoe, called a *piragua*, set off in pursuit, and soon gained upon the Spaniards, whose object was to pull for the port of Araya, two leagues and a half across the gulf (of Cariaco).

Flight from the monastesy.

They pulled as men pulling for their lives, but the swift *piragua* still gained upon them; and they had not proceeded more than a league, when they saw that their only chance was to take to the shore again, and throw themselves into one of the dense beds of cactus with which that coast abounds. The *piragua* and the canoe landed not "a quoit's-throw" from each other. Happily there was time enough for the Spaniards to take refuge amongst the cactuses, pervious to despair, but otherwise hardly to be penetrated by a fully-armed man. The Indians were naked, and though they made great efforts to get at the Spaniards in this "thorn fortress," they could not do so,* though they were at one time very near to them, so near that Father Joan Garceto lived to tell Las Casas,—how one Indian was close upon him, and lifted up his club (*macana*) to kill him, and the Father bent his knees, and shut his eyes, and raised his heart to God; but when he looked up, there was no one. Finally, in the course of the next day, they got to their countrymen's ships. De Soto died of the wounds which he had received, as the arrows were poisoned. The other servants of Las Casas, all but the two or three who perished at the first onset, together with the Franciscans, arrived in a short time at St. Domingo.

Escape of the Spaniards.

All this happened in little more than a fort-

* "Y como los Indios eran, de los piés á las cabezas, desnudos, estubieron mucho tiempo en llegar aquella poca distancia en donde estaban los Seglares y Frailes. Y parece que habia tanta espesura que no pudieron menearse." — Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 158.

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night after the Clerigo's departure. Meanwhile, he himself had been carried by the ignorance of his mariners far beyond the port of St. Domingo: he had to waste two months in beating against contrary currents; and finally he landed on another part of the island of Hispaniola. As he was travelling thence to St. Domingo in company with other persons, and they were taking their *siesta* on the bank of a river, and he was asleep under a tree, a party from the city came up to them, and, being asked the news, said that the Indians of the Pearl Coast had killed the Clerigo Bartolomé de Las Casas and all his household. Those who journeyed with the Clerigo said, "We are witnesses that that is impossible." While they were disputing, Las Casas awoke to hear this news; and, versed in misfortune as he was, this must have been the most fatal intelligence he ever received, and the most difficult to bear, for, though he was sure enough that some of it was untrue, yet he could easily divine that some terrible disaster had happened to his little colony. Afterwards, he came to look upon the event as a judgment upon him for having acted in company with men whose only object had been self-enrichment, saying, "that though God uses human means to bring about his ends, yet that such helps (*adminículos*) are not needed for preaching the gospel." "Still," as he urges on the other side, "if he was in such haste to accept the offer of the *audiencia*, it was but to prevent the slaughter and destruction which Ocampo's expedition was occasioning."

Las Casas learns the fate of his colony.

Meanwhile, in great anxiety to hear the whole of the bad news, he approached the city of St. Domingo, and when near there, some "good Christians," friends of his, came out to meet and console him, offering him money, even as much as four or five thousand ducats, for a new attempt to colonize.

But none was to be made: and here, not without much regret at such an ending, we take leave of any further hopes from the Clerigo's noble attempt at colonization; and must content ourselves with being rejoiced that he returned in safety from the Indians of the Pearl Coast, who little knew the disservice they had been doing to their ill-fated race, in thrusting away from them its greatest benefactor.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAS CASAS BECOMES A DOMINICAN MONK— THE PEARL COAST IS RAVAGED.

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THE transactions narrated in the preceding chapter did not pass without much comment,

Comments of contemporaries.

and, amongst other comment, that of contemporary historians, who have given a most unjust and inaccurate version of the whole affair. It affords them great amusement to talk of the "smock-frock soldiers" of the Clerigo, and of the labourers dressed like Knights of Calatrava; but, as we have seen from his own account, which he says is "the pure truth" (*la verdad pura*), none of these labourers went to Cumaná, and, if they had gone there, it was not from their body that the knights were to have been chosen. There were also other statements made by these historians equally false, which Las Casas takes the pains of refuting.

If the writer of this narrative may be permitted to fancy himself addressing Las Casas (and a fearful consideration it is, that historical writers and the people they write about may some day be brought into each others' presence), he would say, "You need not have spent so many pages of your valuable history in confuting what

Address from the author to Las Casas: *ex post eventu sapientia.*

has been written on the subject of your expedition, with manifest ill-nature, by Gomara, or, in the spirit of mere worldliness, by Oviedo. But I should like to suggest to you (having been made wise by the event), that, when you had once collected this body of labourers together, and had brought them to Porto Rico, you should not have let them disperse; but, instead of going to the *audiencia* at St. Domingo (never likely to be friendly to you), to prevent the ill effects of Ocampo's expedition, you should have accompanied him at once to Cumaná.

"It was certain that his expedition would render the Indians intolerant of your designs; and you could hardly hope to be in time to check his proceedings by orders from St. Domingo. Besides, according to your own account, Ocampo was a witty, gracious, agreeable man, an old friend of yours; and had you accompanied him on the voyage, and told him the real feelings of powerful people at court, and then addressed such offers of personal advantage to himself, as I think you might have made, you would perhaps have gained him over. Then at the head of your two or three hundred colonists, and with your own vessels and outfit, you would have been more powerful than you ever were afterwards, though armed with letters from the *audiencia*. I speak, as I said before, with all the easy wisdom gained by knowing the event; and am aware of the foolishness of most criticism upon action. Moreover, I can thoroughly understand your aversion to bring your great scheme into any contact with what was

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avowedly an avenging, and was likely to be a marauding, expedition.

"I forbear to dwell much upon your rare and unfortunate modesty in yielding to the advice of Father Garceto, and forsaking your little colony, at a time when the presence of one earnest and vigorous man was worth a wilderness of orders from the *audiencia*, which, as you must have known, lost some of their force in every league that they were borne from the centre of authority, until at last in the *llanos*, or the forests, of the Terra-firma, these missives were little better than so much waste-paper."

From the molestation of such remarks, in which, however, criticism is meant to be tempered by profound respect, Las Casas was, in all probability, quite free. He wrote to the King, to Cardinal Adrian (by this time advanced to the Papacy, though Las Casas did not know it), and to his other Flemish friends, to tell them what had happened; and then waited until their answers should arrive from Spain.

Las Casas informs the King of his misfortune.

His thoughts at this period of his life must have been very bitter,—crowded with infinite regrets, and full of fearful anticipations. The prize that had been ever hovering before him was so great—the safety and pacification of vast territories and numerous populations:—the hinderances that had fatally thwarted him were so disproportionately, so malignantly small. The truth is, that for great enterprizes, and even in the conduct of common life, it seems as if two

souls were needed: the one to watch, while the other sleeps; one to do the worldly work, the other the spiritual; and each to cheer the other with a perfect sympathy. Had Las Casas met with but one man having a soul like his own, who would have been a real lieutenant to him, the obstacles in his way, fearful as they were, might have been doubled, and yet his end have been attained. But what could be hoped from men like Berrio or De Soto, who manifestly possessed none, or next to none, of the spirit and intelligence of their leader?

Harmonious conjoint action was then, as it is now, the greatest difficulty in the world.

Happily, there is an end to all things. Human endeavour ends in conquest, or in defeat, and, in case of either being carried to an extreme, is apt to sink into insensibility. There is the swooning limit to mental, as well as to bodily, endurance. It is most picturesque, and seems grandest, when this is the death-swoon; and when a man's good fortunes, his energies, and his life all unite in falling down together before some great calamity. And, if such had now been the case with the heroic Clerigo, it could have been no matter of surprize to any one who had traced his career up to this fatal period.

Of his power to endure and to persevere, the history of the Indies, if faithfully told, will convince every reader. Indeed, in this power lay the peculiarity of his character, and it was that which marked him out from other men of his time as much perhaps as his benevo-

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lence. This kind of perseverance is much more rare than people suppose, and is so hard to maintain, that we cannot but admire even bad men, who silently, resolutely, enduringly pursue some evil object of self-interest, or mere glory, through long and toilsome years. Rarer even than profound attention in the intellect is this kind of pertinacity in the moral powers. Each day brings its own interests with it, and makes its claims very loudly upon the men of that day. But a man with a great social purpose, like Las Casas, has to work on at something, which, for any given day, appears very irrelevant and makes him seem very obtrusive. This unwelcome part he must perform amidst the disgust and weariness of all other people,—through weeks, months, years perhaps, of the most dire discouragement,—when all the while life seems too short for a great purpose, and when he feels the tide of events ebb by him, and nothing accomplished. The spectre of Death cowers in his pathway, and whenever he has time to think away from his subject, occurs to threaten him. But all these vexations and hinderances are as nothing when compared with the weariness and want of elastic power which arise from that terrible familiarity with their subject, which, in the case of most persons, unless they have very deep and very imaginative souls, grows over and incrusts, like a fungus, the life of their original purposes. There are everywhere men of an immense capacity for labour, if their duties are such as come to them day by day to be done, and are connected with

The rarity of perseverance in a great cause.

Much conversancy with a subject apt to destroy all care about it.

self-advancement or renown; but that man is somewhat of a prodigy who is found, in self-appointed labour, as earnest, as strenuous, and as fresh for his work, as those who receive impulses daily renewed which keep them up to their appointed tasks.

Such considerations demand our attention when contemplating the career of such a remarkable man as Las Casas. The age in which he lived was one of singular movement; and his was a mind capable of great versatility, and inclined to take an interest in many things. Wars with France, conquests in Italy, contests with England, civil commotions about the liberties of the Spanish Parliaments, the suppression of heretics, dire strife throughout the Germanic Empire, and hard-contested battles with the Moors, were all of them subjects, that in their turn agitated Charles the Fifth and his ministers. Vast discoveries of unknown lands, unheard-of treasures in gold and precious stones, new animals, new men, new trees, the most wild and fanciful forms of life, extraordinary changes of fortune, and romantic adventures, were the daily topics in the Indies. This remarkable man, Las Casas, heard all these things, sympathized with all men's feelings about them; but hardly, I conceive, for any single day, omitted to do something in promoting the fixed purpose of his life. Walking about amongst his fellow men in that tremendous and saddening solitude in which a great idea enwraps a great man; feeling that all his efforts, even if successful, might be so too late; it is to be wondered that

Las Casas alone with his subject amidst the turmoil of the Empire.

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such a man retained his sanity, and that we are cognizant but of one long fit of dire despondency in a life of such unwearied effort, such immense successes, and such overpowering disappointments.

The present was the lowest point of depression that the resolute mind of Las Casas ever sounded.

Despondency of Las Casas.

In recounting the latter part of his story as a colonist, a certain hopelessness creeps in upon his narrative. Perhaps the Indians are by the profound ways of Providence ordained to be destroyed, as many other nations have been; perhaps the Spaniards are not to be saved from the commission of great wickedness and from decay of their power; perhaps his own merits were not such as to warrant his being the man chosen to save the one nation, or to redeem the other.* Thus he argues. He intimates that he should have gone back to Spain to seek new remedies, had he possessed the means; and that, if he had done so, the whole course of events in the Indies might have been greatly changed for the better. I think it is evident, however, that it was not strictly want of means (did not his friends come out to meet him, proffering money?),

* "Pero en la verdad no se lo puso Dios en el corazon que fuese, ó porque él no lo mereció, ó porque aquellas gentes segun los profundos juicios divinos se habian con otras muchas de perder, ó porque tambien los facinerosos pecados de nuestra Nacion que en aquellas gentes han cometido, no se habian tan presto de fenecer."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 159.

but that the hopeful spirit, which had been the mainstay of his life, was now deficient in him. Had he been a weak, a selfish, or not a religious man, he would have been absolutely broken-hearted. He was probably as utterly cast down as a good man can be: and I conjecture that he suffered under that abject, nervous depression which results from extreme distress of mind or prolonged overwork, and which none, but those who have suffered something like it, can imagine.

There are but small indications of the mental sufferings which Las Casas went through at this period of his life. As a gentleman, a scholar, an ecclesiastic, above all, as a Castillian, Las Casas was not likely to spread out the sorrows of his soul on the pages of his history; but enough is there, even in the restrained tone of the narrative, to show how his ardent nature must for the moment have been crushed into torpor by misfortune.

Las Casas does not display his grief.

The kind Dominicans, his old friends, received him into their monastery. There I fancy him sitting in some retired nook in their garden, thinking at times of the similar garden at Cumaná, or of the court at Barcelona, Valladolid, or Saragossa, and the great men he had seen and heard there;—then of his old enemy the Bishop of Burgos, whereupon the tears come into his eyes, for, in the bitterest encounters, there is a tenderness which is to come out hereafter. And, besides, he thinks the Bishop would not exult over him now, but would be rather sorry than otherwise. He has sat so long (the once restless

His thoughts in the monastery.

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man!) that the timid lizard has hurriedly rustled by him many times. And now, with measured step, comes one of his kind hosts, and seats himself on the bench beside him,—a certain Father Betanzos, whom the Clerigo had known for several years, a grey-haired young man, grey from his terrible penances in other lands, who will hereafter be a most prominent figure in the history of the New World. And now the good monk, alluding perhaps to some speech which the Clerigo had uttered in the first bitterness of his disappointment, about retiring from the world, exalts the theme, impresses upon him the paramount necessity for a man to consider his own soul and what he can do to save that, tells him he has done enough for the Indians, and delicately hints that the Clerigo does not seem to be the chosen vessel for the conversion of these nations: to which, in his intense humiliation, Las Casas makes but a poor reply, and, indeed, thinks it must all be true. And then the severe young monk moves away, quite satisfied that he has done a very serviceable thing for the soul of his friend.*

Father Betanzos and Las Casas.

Whether the rest of the above picture is to the life, or not, at any rate we know that the brethren did solicit him to become one of themselves. He pleaded that he had written to the King, to Cardinal Adrian, and

* "Un Padre llamado Fray Domingo de Betanzos, religioso en virtud y Religion señalado, este le dió muchos tientos que fuese Fraile."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 159.

to others of his Flemish friends; and that he must await their answers. "What would it profit you, if you should die before their answers come?" replied Father Betanzos.* From this it appears as if Las Casas had been ill, although he mentions no illness at this point of his narrative. I conjecture, therefore, that it was the temporary abeyance of the energy within him, which looked like the precursor of death. Hopeless for the moment of gaining his great object, sick of the world, and beginning to ponder more frequently on the state of his soul,† he yielded to the wishes of the friendly monks, and received the tonsure, to the great joy of the brethren, and also of the inhabitants of St. Domingo, but for very different reasons, as he remarks—the former no doubt rejoicing to gain a distinguished and good man for their brotherhood, the latter delighting to see a man interred, as they thought, in a monastery, who had been in the habit of hindering them in all the robberies and wickedness which they had been wont to commit for their "iniquitous temporal interests."

Las Casas takes the tonsure.

Afterwards letters for him did come from court, breathing kind encouragement and invitation from his friends the Flemings; but his superiors did not show him these letters, for fear of

Not forgotten by his friends at court.

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* "Respondió el buen padre, si entre tanto vos os moris, quién rescivirá el mandato del Rey ó sus Cartas?"—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 159.

† "Estas palabras le atravesaron el alma al Clérigo Casas, y desde allí comenzó á pensar mas frequentemente de su estado."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 159.

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disquieting his mind. Letters also came from Pope Adrian for the Clerigo, but it was when he could no longer dispose of himself.* If he had gone to Spain, it is probable, as he would have found King Charles there, that he might have succeeded in some new enterprize of colonization.† But this was not to be; and for some years he remained in the monastery of St. Domingo, moving in the narrow circle of his duties there, and, as we are told, writing his history‡ of the Indies.

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* "Y el mismo Papa Adriano tambien le mandó escribir, sino que llegaron las Cartas cuando ya no podia determinar de sí."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 159.

† Las Casas would have been well able to prove that his failure had not arisen from any palpable fault of his. Although his own history has been the authority mainly referred to in the foregoing account of his attempt at colonization, it entirely coincides with what remains of the official narrative, sent in to the Emperor by his Majesty's contador, who accompanied Las Casas. This officer describes the opposition which Las Casas met with from the Governor of Cubagua, the desertion of Ocampo's armada, the ruin that on three occasions fell upon the monks, who, he says, have received glorious deaths (*han recibido muertes admirables;*) and he estimates the number of slaves at 600, who were made on that coast previously to Las Casas reaching it. "Ví en la Española que en obra de dos meses se trajeron mas de seiscientos esclavos de do habia de ir Casas y venderlos por los oficiales en Santo Domingo."—*Representacion del* Contador Real (Miguel Castellanos) *que fué con* Casas *a Cumana.*—Quintana, *Apéndices á la Vida de Las Casas*, No. 9.

‡ It is generally said by Quintana, and other learned men, that Las Casas commenced his history at this period in the monastery of St. Domingo. Their assertion may be founded upon some fact which has escaped my observation. The only dates I can refer to, in reference to this point, where Las Casas speaks of the times of his writing, are as follows. In the Prologue there is a passage, quoted below, in which he speaks as if that were written in 1552. In lib. 3, cap. 155, he mentions the year 1560, as the time of his writing; and, in the last sentence but one of his history, he gives the date

Profiting so much as we do by this history, still it must be regretted that Las Casas should have been thus occupied; and, however desirable it might be that he should regard his soul, I cannot but regret, in somewhat of a secular spirit, that he should have been taken away for the present from the civil administration of the Indies, which gained one more devout man, and lost that much rarer character, a profoundly and perseveringly philanthropic reformer, of which latter character the Indies had then far more need than all the rest of the world put together.

Studies of Las Casas in the monastery.

It is doubtful, moreover, whether his studies at the monastery did not do far more harm than good to his faculty for historical writing. It must, I conjecture, have been at this period, that he studied those works which enabled him to confuse his narrative with inappropriate learning. Before his becoming a monk, I imagine he knew little of what Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius Halicarnassensis, Aristotle, the Master of the Sentences, or other learned writers, whose names infest his pages, had said upon any subject. It is not to be forgotten, however, that, while Las Casas dwelt in monastic retreat, he probably

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1561, as the time at which he is then writing. "No puede alguno rehusar con razon de conceder hacerse *hoy que es el año de* 1552 las mismas calamitosas obras que en los tiempos pasados se cometian." He may, however, at a very early period, have begun to collect and prepare his materials for writing, amongst which may be numbered some of the most valuable documents that ever existed as sources of early American history. The one which I should most like to have seen was Tovilla's *Historia Barbárica*, of which, I believe, there is now no trace.

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acquired that knowledge of the Fathers and the Schoolmen, which enabled him to battle so successfully before kings and princes with the most learned persons of his time, using the favourite scholastic weapons of that age.

History of Cumaná immediately after the departure of Las Casas.

Returning to the history of the unfortunate province of Cumaná, it is impossible not to be struck with the great amount of mischief that ensued from the failure of Las Casas, and from the events which led to that failure. The land was now cleared of monasteries, and of the civilization which the religious orders brought with them.* An expedition was sent by the Admiral of the Indies, who had returned to his government of Hispaniola, to chastise the Indians, and to enable the Spaniards in Cubagua to pursue with safety their occupation of pearl-fishing. This expedition was placed under the command of Jacomé Castellon, a vigorous captain, who "fought the Indians, recovered the country, restored the fisheries, and filled Cubagua, and even St. Domingo, with slaves."† Such is the

* This civilization may be judged of by the fact that Juan Garceto was able to preach to the Indians of the Pearl Coast in their own language, as appears from the memorial addressed to the King by the contador who accompanied the expedition of Las Casas. "Remediándose las armadas y los daños de los indios, podria hacerse gran fruto en ellos enviando gobernador y frailes, especial dos franciscos que estan en la isleta de las Perlas, de los cuales el uno fray Juan Garceto les predica en su lengua."—Quintana, *Apéndices á la Vida de Las Casas.*

† "Guerreó los Indios, recobró la Tierra, rehizo la Pesquería, hinchó de Esclavos á Cubagua, í aun á Santo Domingo."—Gomara, *Hist. de las Indias*, cap. 78.

description of Gomara, and such was his idea of success, for he puts the conduct of this commander in favourable contrast with that of Ocampo and Las Casas.

Subsequent history of Cumaná.

But even this miserable ideal of success was not maintained, as may be seen from the subsequent history of the Spanish conquests on the coast of Cumaná. The Spaniards did not succeed in recovering the country, or in restoring the pearl-fisheries. One governor continued to supersede another, without effecting any permanent good for himself, for the Spaniards, or for the Indians. Their history is but a tissue of stupid enormities, reminding the reader of certain melancholy periods in the history of France and Italy, when all the worst passions of men were let loose for the smallest ends; and when intrigues, revolts, massacres, and murders followed one another, without any man, or any set of men, being the better for such things, even in this world. I will not vex the reader with an account of the transactions* of these governors; nor is it

* Their doings are to be found in Pedro Simon's *Noticias Historiales*, primera parte; and Caulin, *Hist. de la Nueva Andalucia*.

De Laet, speaking of expeditions made by one or more of these governors, thus expresses himself:—"Ex hisce expeditionibus, in quibus nihil memorabile annotatum invenimus, quivis suspicari possit, in hisce provinciis nihil illustre, aut quod tantis molitionibus dignum sit, reperiri posse: verum qui animum Hispanorum in ejusmodi expeditionibus recte adverterit, nequaquam mirabitur hæc ipsis accidisse: nam sueti erant aurum atque argentum, aut similia alicujus pretii, barbaris jam parata eripere; neque anxie terræ abdita scrutari, sed loca ubi nihil divitiarum statim in oculos incurre-

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worth while to encumber the page of history with their unfortunate names. Indeed, all along that immense line of coast which stretches from the mouths of the river Orinoco to the Isthmus of Panamá, it might for a long time be said of each respective governor, in the language of Scripture, not taking it literally, perhaps, but adopting the spirit of the passage, that he "wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him."*

There is a narrative, however, which will immediately and adequately convey to the reader's mind the state of things that existed for hundreds of miles along the coast of Cumaná, at a period of twenty years after the failure of the Clerigo's enterprize. The first place which the celebrated Italian traveller, Benzoni, landed at was the island of Cubagua. Jerome Benzoni was a young man who had come out, not merely to see the New World, but to make his fortune.†

Benzoni's account of the Pearl Coast. 1541.

Arrives at Cubagua.

The Governor of Cubagua, a certain Geronimo Ortal, held out bright hopes to the young Italian if he would join him in an expedition into a province in the interior, which was called Dorado. The young man accepted the Governor's proposal.

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bat, leviter præterire: quare non mirum est tot laboribus non plura ab ipsis fuisse inventa, quæ mortales ad penitiorem regionum scrutationem solent allicere."—*Novus Orbis*, lib. 18, cap. 7.

* 1 *Kings*, chap. 16, ver. 25, 30.

† "Quum essem adolescens, annos viginti duos natus, et, multorum exemplo, peregrandi orbis cupidus. * * * * Non minus videlicet rei faciundæ quam visendi Novi Orbis cupidus."—Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 1.

A very few days after this, the Governor of the island of Margarita came over to Cubagua; and the two Governors arranged to have a joint expedition with the object of hunting for slaves. Benzoni accompanied these Spanish authorities: and though, like a young man, he was ready to have a hand in anything that was going on, he appears to have been well aware of the atrocity of the proceedings, which he relates as tenderly as if he had been bred up by Las Casas himself.

Starts on a slave-hunting expedition.

The expedition, setting off one morning from Cubagua, landed in the evening of the same day at the mouth of the river Cumaná, the present Manzanares. This was the very spot where the Franciscan monastery, with its pleasant gardens once stood. Jacomé Castellon's fort, built upon the site of the Clerigo's, had been washed away; but another had been erected in its place, or near it, for it was still necessary to secure a watering-place for the inhabitants of Cubagua, where water was so scarce, that a cask of wine was often exchanged for a cask of water. The pearl-fishery however had ceased entirely, or had ceased to be productive.* Where the witty Ocampo had sought to build his town of Nueva Toledo, there stood now four or five huts, constructed of reeds. The whole of the coast was desolate, and, of the numerous population which once gladdened those shores, scarcely any remained except a few poor

State of the coast at Cumaná.

* "Exstruxerat quidem ante aliud munimentum e cespite in eo littore Jacobus Castellio, quo tempore unionum piscatus vigebat." —Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 2.

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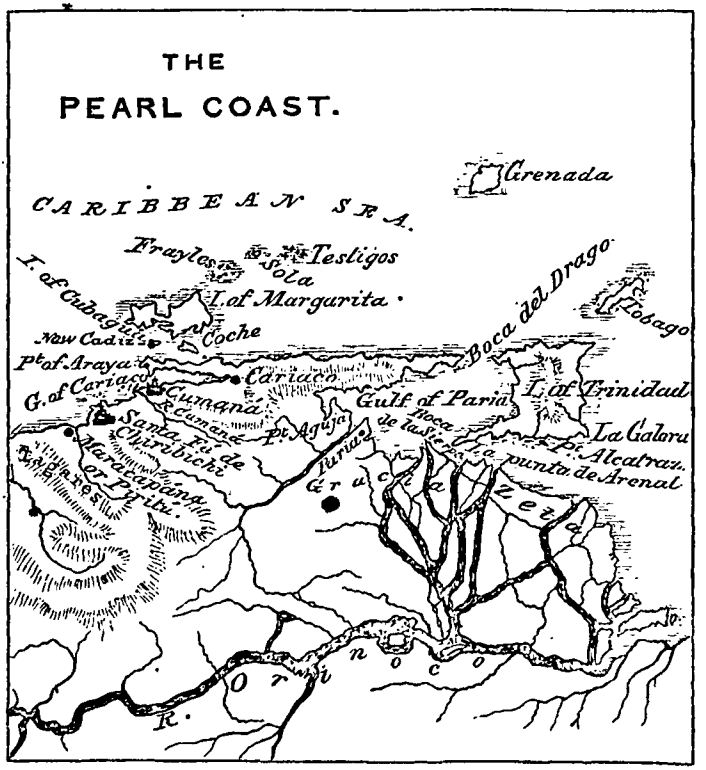
Indian Chiefs, whose presence was a sign of still greater desolation, as they were kept there only for the purpose of assisting the Spaniards in their slave-hunts.*

The first care of this marauding expedition



Expedition moves eastward.

was to move towards the east, along the Gulf of Cariaco, to a part of the country where the

* "Jam Hispani omnem eam oram propé desolaverant: et, ex tanta Indorum multitudine quanta olim erat, nulli fermé tum reperiebantur præter paucos aliquot et pauperes regulos, quibus Hispani pepercerant, ut iis ad operas suas pro mancipiis uterentur." — Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 2.

Spaniards had alliances with the Indian Chiefs. There, with the inducements of a little wine, a little linen, or a few knives, they procured guides. Then commenced a hunt that led the Spaniards through the wildest tracts of country, which Benzoni thinks that foxes would have hesitated to enter. The cruel hunters, like wild beasts, made their forays more by night than by day, and, in the course of a march of a hundred miles, they succeeded in capturing two hundred and forty Indians, males and females, children and grown-up people (*mares ac fœminas, puberes ac impuberes.*)

The hunt successful.

The fear lest their provisions should fall short induced the leader to command a retreat. The Indians endeavoured to cut them off, but unsuccessfully; and the Spaniards gained the coast without molestation. When there, another mode of hunting was adopted. During the daytime the Spaniards hid themselves amidst the dense foliage, or behind the rocks near the sea-coast; and when the Indians came down to fish, the Spaniards rushed out of their hiding places and generally contrived to capture the fishers, who appear to have been mostly women and children.* This mode of prey could not long remain undiscovered. No more Indian women came down to fish, and the Spaniards were driven to try new methods.

Other methods of man-stealing.

For this purpose their leader went to the

* "Hac arte amplius quinquaginta mancipia, omnes ferme fœminas, cum liberis parvulis, cepimus." — Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 2.

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house of a friendly Indian Chief, and, with the usual knives and trumpery, sought to negociate with him, and by his means to make another profitable entrance into the country. This Chief, however, would not allow the Christians to accompany him,* but, taking some of his followers, went himself into some neighbouring territory and returned the next day, bringing sixteen Indians with their hands bound behind their backs, whom he delivered to the Spanish Commander. The coast of Cariaco was now considered to have been sufficiently ravaged for the present; and the expedition returned to Cumaná. When they had all arrived there, the Indian allies took leave of the Spaniards, but, as might naturally be expected, these allies were waylaid on their return by the tribes whose homes they had assisted to desolate. Thereupon they came back to Cumaná, begging for assistance from the Christians, in order to avenge themselves upon the common enemy. The Spanish Commander, though by word and gesture he showed great sympathy for his Indian friends, nevertheless declared that for the present he could not do anything for them, having a work of greater moment on hand. If, however, the hostile Indians should persevere in attacking them, he promised that he would avenge their injuries, as soon as he was able to do so. With this reply they departed in much disgust, saying bitter

Treatment of Indian allies.

* "Regulo Christianos secum ducere in expeditionem non placuit."—Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 2.

things about the rapine of the Christians, who had been the cause of so many evils to them.

This "work of greater moment" was nothing more than a foray along the western coast, for which, in a few days, the whole marauding body started from Cumaná, and arrived at the town of Maracapána. This Indian town, already celebrated for the iniquitous proceedings of Alonso de Ojeda which had taken place in its neighbourhood * was now to be the scene of greater iniquities, and indeed had become an abiding place for such iniquities. It was now more of a Spanish than an Indian town. It contained forty houses occupied by four hundred Spanish inhabitants, who lived by predatory excursions, and were little else than a band of robbers of the worst description. Every year these ruffians chose a leader from amongst themselves, who, taking with him half the number of his associates, and a great body of the Indians inhabiting the coasts of that bay, set off to ravage the territories of the adjacent Indian tribes. While Benzoni was in Maracapána one of these expeditions, as I conjecture,—certainly an expedition of the same nature,—returned to the town bringing no fewer than four thousand slaves. And would that this were anything like the number that had been torn from their homes,—for toil, scarcity of provisions, the bitterness of captivity, and the

Maracapána under the dominion of the Spaniards.

A slave-hunting expedition returns to Maracapána.

* The original cause, as we have seen, of the great rising of the Indians, the consequent expulsion of the Dominicans and the Franciscans, the ill-fated expedition of Ocampo, and the failure of the Clerigo's plan of colonization.

terrible nature of the journey had greatly thinned the number of the captives; and some of those who were unequal to the journey had been put to death on the road. I cannot but quote the exact words of the Italian traveller, which, curiously enough, recal to mind the words used by the Portuguese chronicler* who saw the first cargo of negro slaves arrive at Lagos. "That miserable band of slaves was indeed a foul and melancholy spectacle to those who beheld it: men and women debilitated by hunger and misery, their bodies naked, lacerated, and mutilated. You might behold the wretched mothers, lost in grief and tears, dragging two or three children after them, or carrying them upon their necks and shoulders, and the whole band connected together by ropes or iron chains around their necks or arms or hands."†

The Spaniards who conducted this troop had traversed no less than seven hundred miles, into regions, which, on their first discovery, were largely populated, but which, "when I came there," says Benzoni, "were nearly reduced to a solitary desert."

From the same eye-witness we learn the fate of these slaves. They were carried to the island

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* Azurara, cap. 25, quoted before in this history.

† "Spectaculum profecto fœdum ac miserabile intuentibus calamitosum agmen illud servorum: nuda, lacera, mutilata corpora, fama et miseria debilitatos viros feminasque. Infelices matres cerneres duos tresve filios trahentes, aut collo atque humeris gestantes, mœrore et lacrymis perditas: omnium cervices, brachia, manus funibus et catenis ferreis innexa erant."—Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 3.

of Cubagúa,' where the fifth was taken for the King. The letter C. was branded upon all of them—the initial, I suppose, of Charles the Fifth, himself a truly humane man, who, except in matters of religion, and that only in his latter days, was as sparing of human life as he was of all other good material, and who certainly always manifested the kindest consideration for his Indian subjects. The great bulk of the captives were then exchanged for wine, corn, and other necessaries; nor did these accursed marauders hesitate to make a saleable commodity of that for which a man should be ready to lay down his own life in defence—namely, the child that is about to be born to him.*

Wonderful brutality of slave-dealers on the Pearl Coast.

Then came the horrors of the passage, doubly horrible, as Benzoni notices, to many of these Indians, because they were from the inland countries (*mediterranei homines, navigandi tædium ægrè tolerantes*); and there, in the foulness and heat of these little vessels, the wretched gangs of slaves ended their unhappy days.†

The expedition to El Dorado, in which Benzoni was engaged to take a part, was cut short by his patron, the Spanish Governor of Cubagua, being put under arrest by orders from the *audiencia* of St. Domingo. Benzoni himself

* "Et, quamvis Indicæ mulieres aliquæ ex Hispanis prægnantes sint, eas tamen quoque vendere nulla ipsis religio est." —Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 3.

† "Etiam non rarò, in summa maris malacia, tanta aquæ et ceteri victus penuria laborant, ut fermè omnes siti, fœtore atque æstu anima interclusa fœdum in modum exspirent."—Benzoni, *Hist. Novi Orbis*, lib. 1, cap. 3.

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fell ill; and, I trust, in his illness thought seriously over his partnership in these evil deeds, in which he partook no more.

I have chosen this narrative of a private individual, as affording a better insight into the state of that unfortunate coast of South America than could be given by a very elaborate account of the proceedings of the various governors, which would necessarily be mixed up with many political and civil events, unimportant in themselves, and of little direct bearing on the subject, while this short but vivid narrative of the Italian traveller brings the social state of the Spanish and Indian communities on that coast, clearly—too clearly,—before us.

First patent of missions. 1644.

One hundred years had to pass away, from that time, before the first patent of those missions which were destined to civilize and Christianize New Andalucia was issued. It bears date 1644, and was granted in consequence of the demand of a soldier (name unknown), who begged that Franciscan monks might be sent to those parts, offering himself to teach them the language, and to provide the funds.*

In the course of his memorial, the good soldier

* "Que vengan á esta tierra seis ú ocho Frayles de San Francisco, á los quales yo enseñaré la lengua de estos Naturales de muy buena gana, y los daré suficientes para que puedan ser doctrineros, y los reduzcan á nuestra Santa Fé Cathólica; y los enseñaré por un Abecedario que para ello haré, y les asistiré de noche y dia hasta ponerlos capaces con el favor de Dios."—Caulin, *Hist. de la Nueva Andalucía*, lib. 3, cap. 1.

mentions that certain letters were wanting in the language of these Indians, and, "as these letters were not to be found in their alphabet, so," he adds, "in these men themselves were not to be found truth or shame, the knowledge of God, or Faith, or Loyalty, or Law."*

And this was "the earthly Paradise" of Columbus,—a land which the Italian traveller considered as the most beautiful and fertile of all that he beheld in the Indies, but which was reduced to such a state of barbarism by misgovernment, that it literally passed out of the notice and memory of man, and lay, as it were, forgotten for whole generations.

This, too, was the coast which the benevolent Pedro de Córdova and the indefatigable Las Casas had taken into their adoption, and which they would have made a paradise for the Indians, had they been suffered to do so. That their efforts should have failed is only another reason for recording them. Success tells its own story. Besides, to chronicle such failure is to encourage other men in like reverses, who must learn to perceive that the evil around them is deprived of none of its natural influence for the sake of promoting their endeavours, and that no special success, discernible at least to our eyes, waits upon an enterprize because it is undertaken from the

* "Y son las siguientes: B. D. F. L. R. Y así como faltan estas cinco letras, falta en ellos Verdad y Vergüenza, conocimiento de Dios nuestro señor; fáltales Fé; fáltales Ley; y fáltales Rey."—Caulin, *Hist. de la Nueva Andalucía*, l. 3, c. 1.

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noblest motives, and carried on with the uttermost self-sacrifice. If it were otherwise, what a mere miserable nursling the highest human endeavour would become.

BOOK X.

HERNANDO CORTES.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXPEDITIONS PRIOR TO THAT OF CORTES—HIS EARLY LIFE—HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMAND OF AN EXPEDITION—SETS SAIL FROM SANTIAGO.

CHAPTER II.

CORTES REFUSES TO BE SUPERSEDED—SAILS FOR COZUMEL—THENCE TO TABASCO—HIS FIRST VICTORY IN NEW SPAIN—SAILS ON TO ST. JUAN DE ULUA—IS CHOSEN GENERAL—ENTERS CEMPOALA—FOUNDS VILLA RICA DE LA VERA CRUZ—SENDS MESSENGERS TO THE SPANISH COURT—DESTROYS THE FLEET.

CHAPTER III.

CORTES MARCHES TO TLASCALA — GREAT BATTLE WITH THE TLASCALANS—THE TLASCALAN SENATE ALLIES ITSELF TO CORTES—CORTES ENTERS CHOLULA — THE GREAT MASSACRE THERE — FIRST SIGHT OF MEXICO — CORTES ENTERS MEXICO—DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY.

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INTERVIEWS BETWEEN CORTES AND MONTEZUMA—CORTES VISITS THE GREAT TEMPLE—THE MEXICAN IDOLATRY.

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CONSEQUENCES OF THE CAPTURE—MONTEZUMA BECOMES A VASSAL OF THE KING OF SPAIN—PAMPHILO DE NARVAEZ ARRIVES UPON THE COAST—CORTES QUITS MEXICO AND DEFEATS NARVAEZ.

CHAPTER VII.

DURING THE ABSENCE OF CORTES THE MEXICANS REBEL—SIEGE OF THE SPANISH GARRISON—CORTES RETURNS TO MEXICO.

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CHAPTER IX.

RESOLUTION OF THE TLASCALAN SENATE—CORTES IN TEPEACA—FORMS A GREAT ALLIANCE AGAINST THE MEXICANS—PREPARES TO MARCH AGAINST MEXICO—REVIEWS HIS TROOPS AT TLASCALA.

CHAPTER X.

THE MARCH TO TEZCUCO—CORTES SURPRIZES IZTAPALAPA—EXPEDITION ROUND THE GREAT LAKE—FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIEGE OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXPEDITIONS PRIOR TO THAT OF CORTES—HIS EARLY LIFE—HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE COMMAND OF AN EXPEDITION—SETS SAIL FROM SANTIAGO.

THE course of this narrative brings us to a hero of a very different kind from Las Casas, who for the present lies dormant in his monastery. The leader, whose daring deeds require now to be chronicled, was a thorough adventurer, a very politic statesman, and an admirable soldier. He was cruel at times in conduct but not in disposition; he was sincerely religious, profoundly dissembling, courteous, liberal, amorous, decisive. There was a certain grandeur in all his proceedings. He was very fertile in resources, and, while he looked far forward, he was at the same time almost madly audacious in his enterprizes. This strange mixture of valour, religion, policy, and craft was a peculiar product of that century.

The character of Cortes.

The conquest of Mexico could hardly have been achieved at this period under any man of less genius than that which belonged to Hernando Cortes, who is the hero in question. And even his genius would probably not have attempted the achievement, or would have failed in it, but for a singular concurrence of good and

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evil fortune, which contributed much to the ultimate success of his enterprize. Great difficulties and fearful conflicts of fortune not only stimulate to great attempts, but absolutely create the opportunities for them.

Previously, however, to bringing Cortes on the scene, the discovery of New Spain must be gradually traced back to its origin, and the connection must be shown which it had with various enterprizes that have already been commemorated.

One of the objects of this work.

It is one of the principal objects of this work to show the links which bind the various discoveries and conquests together, and thus to bring before the reader's mind, not a series of isolated transactions, however remarkable, but a connected history, in which it may be seen how great things grew out of little, and how the minor actors in this complicated tragedy (for the conquest of America cannot be looked at otherwise than as a great tragedy) contributed no little to the final dread result.

Pedigree of discovery in the New World.

Going back, then, to the earliest times of discovery, let us trace the descent of the great mariners and conquerors who preceded in, and made broad, the way for Cortes. The well-known Ojeda was

Columbus —Ojeda.

the companion of Columbus. Favoured by the powerful Bishop of Burgos, Ojeda became a discoverer on the Terra-firma. Then followed the

Nicuesa and Ojeda.

disastrous expeditions, before narrated, of Nicuesa and Ojeda. Ojeda dies in obscurity; Nicuesa perishes miserably; and Vasco Nuñez de Balboa,

who had come out, concealed from his creditors in the hold of a vessel, takes the command, as it were, of Spanish discovery. Very renowned, and more important even than renowned, were his discoveries. He discovered the South Sea: he came upon a civilization, in the neighbourhood of Darien, which was superior to anything that had been seen in the islands: he heard, in a dim way, of Peru. It will be remembered what tempting hopes the young chief, Comogre's son, held out to Vasco Nuñez—probably in Pizarro's presence—with respect to a land which lay southwards. It will be remembered also what part in these proceedings the Bachiller Enciso took, in whose vessel Vasco Nuñez had come out; and how the Bachiller was forced to return to Spain.

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa.

The Bachiller Enciso.

The tidings of great discovery near Darien reached the mother-country, and all Spain was excited with the idea of fishing for gold. The Bachiller carried his potent enmity to court. Vasco Nuñez was superseded, and Pedrarias sent out with the most splendid and well-equipped armament that had yet left Spain for the Indies. The miserable doings of Pedrarias, and the sad fate of Vasco Nuñez, have been duly recorded.

Tidings of discovery reach Spain.

Armament of Pedrarias.

Fate of Vasco Nuñez.

Now, among the hidalgoes who had come out with Pedrarias, were several, who, perceiving that nothing was to be done at Darien, asked permission of the Governor to go to Cuba; and Pedrarias, not knowing what to do with his soldiers, consented. One of these men was Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a

Bernal Diaz.

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simple soldier, who has, however, written a narrative of considerable authority. This man tells us that he and his companions were received in a friendly manner by Velazquez, the Governor of Cuba, who promised to give them *encomiendas* of Indians, whenever there should be vacancies. As these vacancies, however, would only occur from the death of the proprietors, or the confiscation of their property (for the island of Cuba was already pacified, to use the phrase of that day), *encomiendas* of Indians fell vacant but slowly. The impatient conquerors, who had now been three years from home, and had met with nothing hardly but disease and disaster, resolved to form an expedition of discovery on their own account. Taking into their company some Spaniards in Cuba who also were without Indians, this little party of discoverers amounted to one hundred and ten persons. They found a rich man of Cuba willing to join them, named Francisco Hernandez de Córdova, who was chosen as their captain, and no doubt helped to furnish out their expedition. With their united funds they bought three vessels. One of these vessels belonged to the Governor Velazquez, and he wished to be paid in slaves for his share of the venture, requiring as a condition that the expedition should go to some islands between Cuba and Honduras, make war, and bring back a number of slaves. The gallant company, however, refused to entertain this suggestion. They said that what Velazquez required was not just, and that neither God nor the King demanded of them that they should

Origin of De Córdova's expedition.

How Velazquez wished to be paid.

make free men slaves.* Velazquez admitted that they were right, and that their intention of discovering new lands was better than his. He aided them with the necessaries for the voyage, and they departed on the 8th of February, 1517, having on board a celebrated pilot, named Anton Alaminos, who, as a boy, had been with Columbus, in one of his voyages.

De Córdova sets sail, Feb. 8, 1517.

When they had doubled Cape San Antonio, they took a westward course, navigating in a hap-

hazard fashion, knowing nothing of the shoals, or the currents, or the prevailing winds. They could not, however, fail to make a great discovery, as any one may see who will look at the map, and observe how near to the continent

* "Y desque vimos los soldados, que aquello que pedia el Diego Velazquez no era justo, le respondimos, que lo que dezia, no lo mandava Dios, ni el Rey; que hiziessemos a los libres esclavos."—Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva-España*, cap. 1. Madrid, 1632.

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the western extremity of the island of Cuba lies. Singularly enough, they found land at the nearest spot at which they could have found it, touching at the point of Cotoché. This point was named from the words *con escotoch*, which mean "Come to my house," a friendly invitation which the voyagers heard very often at this part of the coast. They could not but at once remark that the natives of this new-found land were more civilized in dress and in the arts of life than the inhabitants of the islands. They saw also a great town, to which they gave the name of Grand Cairo; and buildings made of stone and mortar were for the first time discovered by the Spanish conquerors. From what remains there are to be seen of buildings, even to the present day, in the province of Yucatan, we may well conclude how great an impression must have been produced upon those Europeans who were first permitted to see the signs of a civilization which has puzzled the learned ever since. The natives of Yucatan had apparently, however, made more advance in the arts of life than in the higher attributes of sincerity and good faith. They invited the Spaniards to their homes, laid an ambuscade for them, and wounded several. The Spaniards, in their turn, succeeded in capturing two Indians, who afterwards became interpreters.

Discovers land at P. Cotoché.

Yucatan.

The expedition of De Córdova, having begun ill, continued to be unfortunate. The explorers went further westwards and discovered the Bay of Campeche, proceeding as far as Champoton;

but they got into an encounter with the natives, lost a great many of their men, suffered from terrible thirst, and, after enduring many miseries, made their way back to Havana, and from thence* to Santiago, where the Governor Velazquez then was. The news brought back by the expedition, and certain golden ornaments which they had to show (well-wrought, but not of pure gold), could not fail to stimulate Velazquez to further attempts at discovery. Indeed, the fame of De Córdova's voyage spread far and wide, and various conjectures were instantly propounded as to who these islanders were, who built houses of stone and mortar; and some ingenious persons were ready to declare that these Indians must be the descendants of those Jews whom Titus and Vespasian had driven into exile. Velazquez lost no time in fitting out another armada, the command of which was given to a young countryman of his, who was treated by him as a relative, and whose name was Juan de Grijalva. Pedro de Alvarado, a name afterwards too well known in American history, commanded one of the vessels in this expedition. Bernal Diaz was also employed, and Anton Alaminos went out as principal pilot.

De Córdova returns.

* In his way from Havana to Santiago on foot, Bernal Diaz mentions that he and his party came to the *pueblo* of Yaguarama, which belonged to the Clerigo Las Casas.—"Llegámos á un pueblo de Indios, que se dezia Yaguarama, el qual era en aquella sazon del Padre Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, que era Clórigo Presbitero, y despues le conocí Fraile Domínico, y llegó á ser Obispo de Echiapa: y los Indios de aquel pueblo nos dieron de comer."—Bernal Diaz, *Conquista de la Nueva-España*, cap. 7.

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Grijalva's expedition sails, April 5, 1518.

Grijalva set sail from Cuba on the 5th of April, 1518, and, his vessels being driven by the currents in a more southerly direction than the former expedition, first saw land at the island of Cozumel, and afterwards resuming the direction

which De Córdova's expedition had taken the year before, extended the field of discovery.

Summing up the result of what took place in the course of these expeditions, we may say that they were so far successful that they made the Spaniards acquainted with the existence of new lands on the continent of America, and with an Indian people of greater civilization than had hitherto been met with, who built houses instead of huts, and whose mode of dress was less primæval than the inhabitants of the islands. Such, with some gold, had been the result of the expeditions under Hernandez de Córdova and Juan de Grijalva, up to the time at which our narrative commences.

Result of discoveries prior to Cortes.

De Córdova had discovered Yucatan;* and Grijalva, entering the river Tabasco, which falls into the Gulf of Mexico, discovered New Spain, a name that was first given to that country in the course of this voyage.

Grijalva went as far as the province of Panuco, but made no settlement in those parts, for which he was severely and unjustly blamed by Velazquez.

Grijalva sends home Pedro de Alvarado.

Previously to returning with the whole of his fleet, Grijalva sent home Pedro de Alvarado with the sick and wounded, and with the gold which had been obtained from the natives in the way of barter. The desire of Velazquez for discovery and settlement was likely to be increased by the accounts brought back by Alvarado; and, as Grijalva did not return so soon as was expected, Velazquez was anxious to gain tidings of what had become of him. This Governor, accordingly, prepared, or perhaps we should say, authorized the preparation of, a larger fleet than he had hitherto sent out; and, after some hesitation,

Velazquez prepares a new fleet: gives the command to Cortes.

* De Solis and Pinzon had seen part of Yucatan in 1506, but had not landed. See Nav., *Col.*, vol. 3, p. 47. See also Herrera, dec. 1, lib. 6, cap. 17. The name of Yucatan has been attributed to a mistake which must often have happened. The Spaniards asked the name of the land; the Indians answered, "I do not understand," which passed afterwards for the name. "Los indios no entendiendo lo que les preguntaban, respondian en su lenguaje y decian YUCATAN YUCATAN, que quiere decir *no entiendo, no entiendo*: así los españoles descubridores pensaron que los indios respondian que se llamaba Yucatan, y en esta manera se quedó impropriamente á aquella tierra este nombre Yucatan." — Navarrete, Salvá, y Sainz de Baranda, *Coleccion de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España*, tom. 1, p. 418. Madrid, 1844.

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conferred the command on Cortes.* From the Governor's instructions, it appears that one of the first objects of the expedition was to have been the search after Grijalva,† but that captain returned to Cuba before Cortes sailed.

It will here be desirable to give a brief account of the previous life of this Commander, as much may be inferred from it in reference to the important transactions which are now to be narrated.

Birth and parentage of Cortes.

Hernando Cortes was born in the year 1485,‡ at Medellin, in Estremadura. His father was Martin Cortes, of Monroy: his mother Donna Catalina Pizarro Altamirano. Both father and mother were of good birth, but poor. The little Hernando was a sickly child, and many times during his childhood was at the point of death.

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* He had at first offered the command to a certain Baltasar Bermudez; but he was a free-spoken and independent person, and asked such conditions as Velazquez would not consent to, and broke off the negociation with angry words:—"Enojóse con él, y hechóle de sí, quizá como solia, con desmandádas palabras."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 113.

† See the instructions given by Velazquez to Cortes, *Documentos Inéditos*, tom. 1, p. 385.

‡ The day of his birth has been said to be the same as that of Luther; but this is a mistake. A Spanish writer builds upon the supposed coincidence a contrast between the merits of the two: the one "persecuting;" the other extending the "Catholic Faith." "Nació este Ilustre Varon el dia mismo que aquella bestia infernal, el Pérfido Heresiarca Lutero, salió al mundo: Este para persecucion de la Fé Católica, en las partes que estava assentada: Nuestro insigne Capitan, para qué templasse el daño que aquel monstruo causava, y estendiesse la Fé de Cristo nuestro Señor, por su preciosa sangre, en los remotos Antipodas del Mundo." — Pizarro, *Varones Ilustres del Nuevo Mundo*, p. 66.

His education.

When he was fourteen years of age, his parents sent him to the University of Salamanca, where he remained two years, "studying grammar,"* and preparing himself for taking the degree of bachelor-at-laws.†

Resolves upon a soldier's life.

Weary of study, or, as appears probable, weary of the life of a poor student, Cortes returned, without leave, to his parents at Medellin. He neither found, nor made, a happy home for himself;‡ and he determined to seek his fortune as a soldier. For adventurous young men, at that time, two careers were open: to serve under the generous and splendid Gonsalvo Hernandez de Córdova, called the "Great Captain;" or to seek for renown and riches in the New World.

Will accompany Ovando.

At this juncture, Nicolas de Ovando was just going out to supersede Bobadilla, and Cortes resolved to accompany that distinguished personage, also a native of Estremadura. But, while Ovando's armament was preparing, Cortes went one night "to speak with a lady," as his chaplain judiciously expresses it, and as he was walking upon the wall of the back court-yard, it fell with him. The injuries which the young serenader then received, threw him into a fever, and before

Meets with an accident.

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* This meant "a course of study in Latin and Greek, as well as of rhetoric." See note in Folsom's introduction to his translation of the despatches of Cortes, who refers to a "*Plan de los Estudios de la Universidad de Salamanca.*" Madrid, 1772.

† Las Casas, who is generally inimical to Cortes, speaks favourably of his education. He says that Cortes was a bachelor of laws, and "latino."

‡ "Daba, í tomaba enojos, í ruido en Casa de sus Padres."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 1. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

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he recovered, the armament had sailed. He resolved, therefore, to adopt the other course—to go into Italy and take service under the Great Captain. With this view he went to Valencia, but in that city he fell ill again, and passed a year there of obscure hardship and poverty. Finally he returned to Medellin, with the firm intention of proceeding thence to the Indies. His parents gave him their blessing and some money; and, in his 19th year, A.D. 1504, he took his passage from San Lucar, in a merchant vessel, for St. Domingo. The voyage was a bad one, and the vessel on the point of being wrecked, a danger in which Cortes conducted himself with the bravery of one "who was to meet and conquer many greater hazards."*

Takes his passage for St. Domingo. 1504.

A handsome, plausible, well-educated, well-born youth of his own province, who could tell him the local news at home, was sure to be well received by the Governor of Hispaniola. Accordingly, Cortes was employed, under Diego Velazquez, in pacifying certain provinces which were concerned in Anacaona's supposed, or intended, revolt, and when the war was ended Ovando gave the young man an *encomienda* of Indians, and a notarial office in the town of Azua, which had been lately founded.

Obtains an *encomienda* in Hispaniola.

It is an interesting circumstance in the life of Cortes, that he was nearly accompanying Diego de Nicuesa, and would have done so, but

* "Animábalos el Moço Cortés, como el que se havia de ver en otros maiores aprietos." — Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 6, cap. 12.

for an abscess in the right knee. Had Cortes joined the expedition of Nicuesa, it probably would not have been so unfortunate. He might have filled the place that Vasco Nuñez attained to, and his discoveries would then have naturally tended towards South America. But a still more arduous task was reserved for Cortes. His was not the nature to be satisfied with a tame provincial life, winning gold by the slow process of agriculture, or even by the swifter one of mining; and when the second Admiral, Don Diego Columbus, sent Diego Velazquez to subdue and colonize Cuba, Cortes accompanied him, and acted, it is said, as one of his secretaries.

Goes with Velazquez to Cuba.

After the island had been subdued, Cortes was one of those who received a grant of Indians; but here again his unquiet intriguing nature did not suffer him to settle down at once into a pains-taking colonist, or a sedulous official man.

The story of his early life now becomes very confused, as is naturally the case with that of any man who rises to great eminence, and who was connected with some ambiguous transactions. His partizans will try and ignore these affairs altogether,—his enemies will know far more about them than ever happened; and the result is, that the future historian will have to take a middle course, or, which is wiser perhaps, to side now with one party, now with the other, in a most uncertain and dubious manner, relying upon small traits of circumstance and delicate indications of character.

There are two stories of a very different

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Cortes in disfavour with the Governor.

kind, to account for the indignation which Cortes brought upon himself at one time from the Governor, Diego Velazquez. According to one of these accounts, news arrived at Cuba that certain Judges of Appeal, who had been appointed in Spain, had arrived in Hispaniola. It was not often the fortune of governors in the Indies to be popular,—at least, with more than their own faction; and Velazquez formed no exception to this rule. The difficulty for those who thought they were aggrieved by him, was how to carry their complaints to the Judges. Cortes, who, no doubt (if the story be true), had some private grudge against the Governor, agreed to be the bearer of these complaints, and undertook the bold task of passing from one island to the other in an open boat.* He was, however, suspected, seized, and so completely found guilty in the Governor's estimation, that he wished to hang him. Certain persons, however, interceded for Cortes, and Diego Velazquez commuted the punishment into that of sending him as a prisoner to the island of Hispaniola. He was accordingly put on board a vessel bound for that island. Cortes, however, extricated himself from

* Benito Martinez, who presented a memorial to the King, on behalf of Velazquez, in the year 1519, confirms this part of the story.—"Ansimismo dice: que porque este Hernando Cortés capitan, se levantó otra vez cuando la isla Fernandina se empezó de poblar con una carabela y con ciertos compañeros, é Diego Velazquez le prendió, y á ruego de muchos buenos le perdonó, é ahora ha hecho este otro buen hecho en se alzar con la isla, y para hacer su mal hecho bueno, dice mucho mal de Diego Velazquez, y todos los que en su nombre vienen." — *Documentos Inéditos*, tom. 1, p. 408.

his fetters, swam or, as it is said, floated on a log, back again to the shores of Cuba, and took refuge in a church. There he remained some days. A crafty alguazil lay in wait for him, caught him one day as, intent upon paying his addresses to a lady, he was tempted to go beyond the sacred precincts,* and made a prisoner of him. It seemed now as if the fate of Cortes was determined; but many persons interceded for him, and Velazquez, who was a violent, but good-natured man, the first burst of his wrath having been spent, forgave Cortes, but would not, of course, receive such a person into his service any more.

There are several things very improbable in this story,† and Gomara removes some of the stigma of it, by saying that Cortes went to Cuba, as an officer of Pasamonte,‡ the Treasurer, and was employed in the King's service, although the Chaplain admits that Velazquez also employed Cortes to manage business and to look after buildings.§

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* "Descuidándose un Dia, por salir á los amores, un Alguacil, llamado Juan Escudero, á quien Hernando Cortés ahorcó en Nueva-España, entrando por la otra puerta de la Iglesia, le abraçó por detrás, í le llevó á la Cárcel." — Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 1, lib. 9, cap. 9.

† It is improbable, for instance, that Velazquez should have wished to send Cortes to Hispaniola; and it is strange that the latter should have been so anxious to make his way back to Cuba.

‡ "Fernando Cortés fue á la conquista, por Oficial del Tesorero Miguel de Pasamonte, para tener cuenta con los Quintos, í Hacienda del Rei, í aun el mesmo Diego Velazquez se lo rogó, por ser hábil, í diligente." — Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 4. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

§ "Tuvo gracia, í autoridad con Diego Velazquez, para despachar negocios, y entender en Edificios, como fueron la Casa de la Fundicion, y un Hospital." — Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-*

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The other story is, that Cortes was required by Velazquez to marry a certain Donna Catalina Xuarez, one of a family of Spanish ladies who had come over in the suite of the Vice-Queen, Maria de Toledo,—the Governor himself being in love with one of her sisters. It is said that Cortes had given his word to marry Donna Catalina, and was unwilling to redeem it. However this may be, Cortes did marry her, and told Las Casas that he was as well pleased with her as if she had been the daughter of a duchess.* In this story, too, he is spoken of as having been arrested, as having escaped, and as having taken refuge in a sanctuary. According to this account, also, he is made out to have papers upon him which told against Velazquez.

Marriage of Cortes.

Whichever may have been the true† story, or whatever the truth in each story, it is certain that, after a serious feud, the Governor and Cortes became friends, and, as a proof of this, it is mentioned that Velazquez stood as god-father to one of the children of Cortes. After his marriage Cortes employed himself in getting gold by means of his Indians:—"How many of whom died in

Cortes reconciled to the Governor.

España, cap. 4. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

* "Así que casóse al cabo no menos rico que su Muger; y en aquellos dias de su pobreza, humildad y bajo estado le oí decir, y estando conmigo me lo dijo, que estaba tan contento con ella como si fuera hija de una Duquesa."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 27.

† For my own part I am inclined to acquit Cortes of that treachery towards Velazquez which might be inferred from the first story. But I suspect that Catalina Xuarez had considerable cause of complaint against Cortes, whose enmity against the Governor was probably provoked by his siding with her relations.

extracting this gold for him God will have kept a better account than I have," says Las Casas.*

It must have been in the nature of Velazquez to forgive heartily, for we find that he not only did not molest Cortes any more, but that he conferred upon him the office of Alcalde in the town of Santiago, the capital of Cuba. Cortes, therefore, notwithstanding all his previous mishaps, was, in the year 1518, a rising and a prosperous man, and, being thirty-three years old, was at an admirable time of life for a career of vigorous adventure.

Opposition to the appointment of Cortes.

In conferring the command of the fleet on Cortes, Velazquez had been influenced by his secretary Andres de Duero, and by Amador de Lares,† the King's Contador in Cuba; but he disobliged several powerful persons in the island, relations of his own, who were not slow in suggesting that it was very imprudent to confide the expedition to Cortes. The old grudge between the Governor and Cortes was a good subject for these malcontents to dilate upon, and was, no doubt, made use of by all those who did not wish well to the newly-appointed Commander. The sentiments of these opponents to Cortes cannot be better illus-

* "Los que por sacarle el oro murieron Dios habrá tenido mejor cuenta que yo." — Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 27.

† Amador de Lares had been a long time in Italy, and Las Casas was wont to warn the Governor to "beware of twenty-two years of Italy." "Solia yo decir á Diego Velazquez por sentir lo que de Amador de Lares yo sentia: Señor, Guardaos de veinte y dos años de Italia." — Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 113.

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trated than by some jests, which, perhaps, were all their own, but which were uttered in public by a buffoon in the household of Velazquez, named Cervantes. As this buffoon was one day accompanying Cortes and the Governor to the sea-side, where they wished to observe how the vessels were getting on, and was a little ahead of the party, uttering his pleasantries, he turned to the Governor, and said, "Diego." "Well, fool, what do you want?" replied the Governor; "Look what you are about! we shall have to go and hunt after Cortes."* Upon this, Cortes is said to have made some angry answer, which I do not believe in, as it does not show his usual skilfulness and self-command. But it is more probable that Andres de Duero replied for him, saying, "Be quiet, you drunken idiot! do not play the rascal any more; we know well that these malicious things which pretend to be jests, do not come from you."† But the buffoon, not by any means dismayed, went on saying all the way, "Viva, viva! to the health of my friend Diego, and of his lucky Captain, Cortes! and I swear, my friend, that I shall go with Cortes myself to these rich lands, that I may not see you crying, my friend Diego, at the bad bargain you have just made."

Foresight, or knavery, of a buffoon.

It would be difficult to say what impression

* "Mira lo que haceis, no hallamos (bad spelling for *hayamos*) de ir á montear á Cortés." —Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 114.

† "Calla, borracho loco, no seas mas vellaco, que bien entendido tenemos, que essas malicias socolor de gracias, no salen de tí."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 19.

these sayings, and many like them, uttered in jest and in earnest, produced upon the uncertain mind of the Governor. One thing, however, he should have recollected, that if half trust is unwise in dealing with a friend, anything less than unbounded confidence is too little trust in dealing with a reconciled enemy—especially one who has been injuriously treated.

Obliterate enmity by complete confidence.

With regard to the Governor's power to remove Cortes, which some have denied, I have no doubt that it was amply sufficient for the purpose, up to the moment of starting. It is a difficult question, which there are not facts fully to decide, what part Cortes contributed to the expenses of the expedition. His partizans assert that it was two-thirds of the whole; but their own statement will hardly bear out that.* Cortes, like Cæsar, whom we shall find he singularly resembles, was fond of expense, and was probably an indebted man. There is no doubt that whatever Cortes did advance was chiefly borrowed† capital, and borrowed on the security which his appointment by Velazquez

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* "Oyó decir á los de la ciudad que el dicho Cortés habia gastado mas de 5,000 castellanos, é que el dicho Diego Velazquez le habia prestado para ello 2,000 castellanos sobre cierto oro que tenia por fundir, é que oyó decir que el dicho Diego Velazquez habia puesto 1,800 castellanos en rescates é vinos é otras cosas, é tres navíos, el uno era bergantin, é que el dicho Cortés demas de los 5,000 castellanos puso siete navíos suyos, é de sus amigos é de efectos."—*Documentos Inéditos*, tom. 1, p. 487.

† "Y como ciertos Mercaderes, amigos suyos, que se dezian Jaime Tria, ò Geronimo Tria, y un Pedro de Xeres, le vieron con Capitania, y prosperado, le prestaron quatro mil pesos de oro, y le dieron otras mercaderias sobre la renta de sus Indios."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 20.

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afforded, for it is quite ridiculous to assert that he had any independent powers from the Jeronimite Fathers, who were ruling at Hispaniola.

I must remark here upon the deplorable manner in which all these expeditions were managed, the Governor descending to the condition of a merchant-adventurer, and being concerned in the profits of each enterprize. The lamentable result of this state of things has been seen in the proceedings at Darien; and it was a practice unfortunately sanctioned and partaken in by the Spanish Monarchs themselves.

Governors should not be traders.

The complicated form of government, also, in the Spanish Indies had the worst results. Diego Velazquez was a Vice-roy of a Vice-roy; and the person from whom he held authority, Don Diego Columbus, had been, to a certain extent, superseded by other authorities. A surer mode of creating factions could not have been devised. Authority, like land, cannot be held by too simple a tenure, and intermediate interests are fatal to the improvement of the country to be ruled, as of the soil to be tilled.

Indirect tenure of authority injurious.

It was on the 15th of November, 1518, that Grijalva returned to Santiago, bringing with him many tempting signs of the riches of the country he had begun to discover. It is by no means improbable that his arrival produced some considerable change* in the mind of Velazquez, which

Grijalva returns, Nov. 15, 1518.

* Such is Gomara's account ("Bolvió á Cuba Joan de Grijalva en aquella mesma saçon, í huvo con su venidâ mudança, en Diego Velazquez."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 7. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2,) and this is one of the instances

would be observed, and rendered more and more unfavourable to Cortes, by those who had already reminded the Governor that the newly-appointed captain was "an Estremaduran,* full of high, crafty, and ambitious thoughts."†

It is important to enter into these details with respect to the departure of Cortes, as so much of his future conduct depended upon the position he was to take up now in reference to his employer, Velazquez. In truth, the fate of a great empire hung upon the whisperings of certain obscure and interested persons, on the hired jests of a buffoon, and on the petty provincial jealousy which was apt to make an Estremaduran hateful to a Biscayan or to an Andalucian.

Much may be said upon the singular injustice, not to speak of the folly, of depriving Cortes of such a command, after having once confided it to him. His means, his credit, everything that he possessed, were pledged. He had even altered his style of dress, and wore for the first time a plume of feathers,‡ that well became his very handsome countenance, which, however, needed no such adornment to make it distinguished as

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in which there does not appear any motive that Cortes could have for deceiving his chaplain.

* The reader will observe again the influence which a man's place of birth had upon his fortunes in Spain.

† "Que era el Estremeño, mañoso, altivo, amador de honras, í Hombre que se vengaria en aquello de lo pasado."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 7. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

‡ "É demas desto se començó, de pulir, é abellidar en su persona, mucho mas que de ántes, é se puso un penacho de plumas con su medalla de oro, que le parecia muy bien." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 20.

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that of one who was fit to rule his fellow-men. The wisdom of this change of dress may well be questioned. It added, no doubt, to the envious sayings uttered against him; and Cortes should, by this time, have known men well enough to be aware, that it is in little things of this kind that you can the least venture to offend them.

Cortes eager to sail.

It is probable that the Governor began to think of conferring the command of the expedition upon some other person, and that intelligence of this change of disposition being conveyed to Cortes did not render him less alert in his endeavours to get his fleet equipped, and to make a start. To suppose, however, that he really did slip away by night, and that, on the Governor being apprized of it, he hastened to the shore, and that a dramatic conversation took place, in which Cortes said that "these things, and things like them, should be done before they are thought of,"* seems to my mind entirely improbable. In fact, such a story is nearly certain to be the mythical form in which the transaction would come to be related, the fact merely being, that Cortes made immense and perhaps secret haste to get the ships ready, and to take leave of the Governor.

There is a story, which doubtless is true, as

* "Y parando allí dicele Diego Velazquez, ¿como Compadre así os vais? es buena manera esta de despediros de mí? Respondio Cortés: Señor, perdóneme Vuestra Merçed, porque estas cosas y las semejantes ántes han de ser hechas que pensadas: vea Vuestra Merced que me manda."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 114.

Las Casas had it from the mouth of Cortes himself, that he laid hold of all the cattle which a certain butcher had in his possession, who was bound under penalty to supply the town of Santiago, and that Cortes paid for what he seized by a gold chain, which he took off his own neck and gave to the butcher.*

All this haste,† which was afterwards, no doubt, made known to Velazquez, would naturally give him an additional reason for wishing to supersede Cortes, as showing that Cortes had divined what had been the Governor's thoughts. The astute Estremaduran, far from avoiding

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* "Reclamando, aunque no á voces porque si las diera quizá le costara la vida, que le llevarian la pena por no dar carne al pueblo; quitóse luego Cortés una cadenilla de óro que traia al cuello, y diósela al obligado Carnicero, y esto el mismo Cortés á mí me lo dixo."—Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, MS., lib. 3, cap. 114.

† Mr. Prescott is persuaded that the story of the clandestine departure of Cortes is true; but this painstaking and truth-loving historian is, I think, in this instance misled by Las Casas, who, though truthful, was credulous, and in this case was not an eye-witness, and was not, as Mr. Prescott supposes, residing at that time on the island. The story of the purchase of the provisions may be quite correct, and this I believe to be all that Las Casas could quote Cortes for, when he says immediately afterwards, "esto el mismo Cortés á mí me lo dixo."

The truth probably is that Cortes sailed suddenly, but not clandestinely.

The remarks of De Solis on this point seem to me very much to the purpose.—"Ni quando dieramos en su entendimiento y sagacidad esta inadvertencia, parece creíble, que en un Lugar de tan corta poblacion, como era entonces la Villa de Santiago, se pudiesen embarcar trescientos hombres, llamados de noche por sus casas, y entre ellos Diego de Ordáz, y otros familiares del Gobernador, sin que hubiese uno entre tantos, que le avisase de aquella novedad, ú despertasen los que observaban sus acciones al ruido de tanta conmocion; admirable silencio en los unos, y extraordinario descuido en los otros."—De Solis, *Hist. de la Conquista de la Nueva-España*, lib. 1, cap. 10.

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Velazquez at this critical period, took care to be constantly with him, and to be always showing him the greatest attention and respect.* I should, therefore, prefer giving credence to the simple account of Bernal Diaz, who was present, and who says, "Andres de Duero kept advising Cortes that he should hasten to embark, for that the Velazquez party (*los Velazquez*) kept the Governor in a state of excessive changefulness by the importunities of those who were his relations; and after Cortes perceived this, he ordered his wife, Donna Catalina, to see that all the provisions and the dainties, which wives are accustomed to make for their husbands, especially for such an expedition, were immediately embarked on board the ships. And then he gave orders, by sound of trumpet, that all the masters, and pilots, and soldiers should be ready, and that on such a day and night none of them should remain on shore. And, after he had given that command, and had seen them all embarked, he went to take leave of Diego Velazquez, accompanied by his great friends and companions, Andres de Duero and the Contador Amador de Lares, and all the principal inhabitants of the city: and, after many parting salutations from Cortes to the Governor and from the Governor to Cortes, he took leave of him: and the next day, very early in the morning, after

How Bernal Diaz narrates the departure of Cortes.

* "De lo qual tenia dello aviso el Cortes, y á esta causa no se quitava de la compañia de estar con el Governador, y siempre mostrandose muy gran su servidor."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 20.

having heard mass, we went to the ships, and the same Diego Velazquez turned to accompany Cortes, and many other hidalgos, until we were about to sail, and with a prosperous voyage in a few days we arrived at the town of Trinidad."*

Cortes sets sail from Santiago.

It was on the 18th of November, 1518, that Cortes and his companions set sail from Santiago.

His banner displayed a coloured cross on a black ground, with white and blue flames scattered about it, and round the border were the words in Latin, "Let us follow the Cross, and in that sign we shall conquer."†

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* Bernal Diaz, cap. 20.

† "Suestandarte era de tafetan negro, con cruz colorada, sembradas unas llamas azules y blancas, y una letra en la orla que dezia: Sigamos la cruz, y en esta señal vencerémos."—Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 2, lib. 4, cap. 6.

CHAPTER II.

CORTES REFUSES TO BE SUPERSEDED—SAILS FOR COZUMEL—THENCE TO TABASCO—HIS FIRST VICTORY IN NEW SPAIN—SAILS ON TO ST. JUAN DE ULUA—IS CHOSEN GENERAL—ENTERS CEMPOALA—FOUNDS VILLA RICA DE LA VERA CRUZ—SENDS MESSENGERS TO THE SPANISH COAST—DESTROYS THE FLEET.

CORTES proceeded on his way, and was fortunate enough to obtain by promises of payment, with force visible in the back-ground, supplies of provisions, both from the King's stores at Macaca, and from a laden vessel which he met with. In fact, as he said afterwards, he played the part of a "gentleman corsair." After he had arrived at Trinidad, formal orders came from Velazquez to Verdugo, the Alcalde Mayor of that town, to deprive Cortes of the command. But this was now too late. Cortes, as De Solis remarks, knew how to gain men's hearts, and how "to be a superior without ceasing to be a companion." Indeed, he gained over the very messengers whom Velazquez sent: and such was the disposition of the fleet towards its Commander, that it would have been impossible for Verdugo to supersede Cortes. He did not attempt it. In truth, this was a most unreasonable proceeding

Velazquez would deprive Cortes of the command.

on the part of Velazquez; and though it may be said, that Cortes would have shown a higher nobility of mind, if he had obeyed the orders of his superior, yet it could hardly be expected that an ambitious young man, who had spent his all, and become indebted, in order to engage in this expedition, should suffer himself to be deprived of his command in this capricious manner. He wrote a letter of remonstrance and reassurance to Velazquez, and then sailed on to Havana. A similar missive to the former one from Velazquez reached the Alcalde there; but it had no effect. The Alcalde did not dare to arrest Cortes, who wrote another letter to Velazquez in the same strain as before, and then set sail, on the next day, the 10th of February, 1519, for the island of Cozumel.

Cortes does not obey.

This series of transactions was very important. Cortes had now settled the course of his career. He could not return, like Hernandez de Córdova or Grijalva: there was nothing now left for him but ruin, or such ample success as should efface all previous disobedience and misconduct.

The armament consisted of five hundred and fifty Spaniards, two or three hundred Indians, some few negroes, and twelve or fifteen horses, and, for artillery, ten brass guns and some falconets. Bernal Diaz rightly gives a list and an account of the horses.* In truth, it

* "The Captain Cortes, a dark chestnut horse, which died immediately on arriving at San Juan de Ulua.

"Pedro de Alvarado and Hernando Lopes de Avila, a very good chestnut mare for draught or for riding: and, after we came

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would be difficult to estimate the number of men that one horse might be considered equivalent to.

Cortes lands at Cozumel.

Upon the landing of Cortes at Cozumel the inhabitants fled; but, Cortes capturing some of them and treating them kindly, they returned and proved submissive and obliging hosts to the Spaniards.

It was at Cozumel that Cortes, "who put great diligence into everything he did,"* called Bernal Diaz and a Biscayan named Martin Ramos, and asked them what they thought was meant by the words, "Castillan, Castillan," which he was told the Indians of Cotoché had addressed to them when they were in the expedition of Hernandez de Córdova; and Cortes added that he had thought about this many times,† and that by chance there might be Spaniards in those lands. Accordingly, enquiries were made; it was ascertained that there were Spaniards somewhere in that country, and Cortes caused search to be made

Search for Spaniards lost on that coast.

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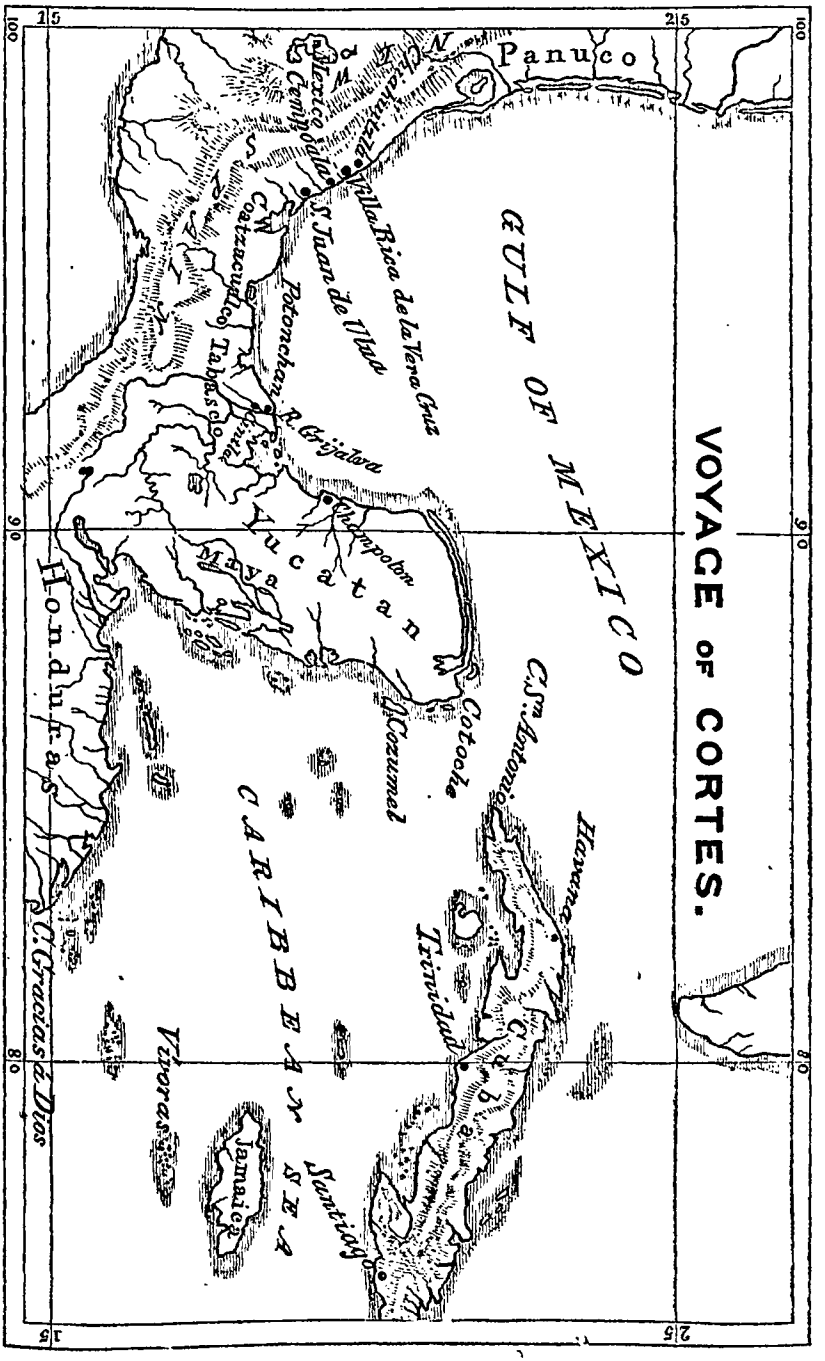
to New Spain, Pedro de Alvarado bought the half of the mare from Lopes de Avila, or took it from him by force.

"Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, a grey mare, a good charger, which Cortes bought from him with some gold cord."

And so there follows a list of thirteen people, each of whom had one of these valuable possessions, and the last man mentioned, Juan Sedeño, was considered the richest man in the armament, for he possessed a ship, a mare, a negro, some cazabi-bread and bacon, and, as Diaz remarks, at that time neither horses nor negroes were to be had except at great expense, which shows that the importation of negroes was not much facilitated by De Bresa's licence.

* "En todo ponia gran diligencia."—Bernal Diaz.

† Cortes does not seem to have communicated that it was part of his instructions to look for these men.


VOYAGE OF CORTES.
GULF OF MEXICO
Panuco
Mexico
Cempoala
Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz
S. Juan de Ulua
Coatzacualco
Tabasco
Potonchan
R. Grijalva
Yucatan
Maya
Champoton
Cozumel
Cotoche
C. Sn. Antonio
Havana
Trinidad
Cuba
CARIBBEAN SEA
Santiago
Jamaica
Viboras
Honduras
C. Gracias á Dios

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for them. It was not successful then, and the fleet sailed away; but on its return to Cozumel (which occurred in consequence of the leakage of one of the vessels), one of the Spaniards sought for made his appearance.

Geronimo de Aguilar is found.

His name was Geronimo de Aguilar, a native of Ecija, and he related how he had been one of the crew under Valdivia, who, it may be remembered, was sent home by the inhabitants of Darien in 1511, to represent their case to the court of Spain. They had been wrecked, at the Vívoras, near Jamaica. Taking to their boat, they were thrown on the coast of the province of Maya, and fell into the power of a cacique of those parts. Valdivia and some of his men were killed and devoured; this man, Geronimo de Aguilar, escaped with another Spaniard, and came into the hands of a cacique who ultimately treated them well. This other Spaniard, who had also received the message of Cortes, was not inclined to leave his wife and children, and moreover he was ashamed to show himself with his nostrils and his ears bored after the manner of the people with whom he lived. Geronimo de Aguilar served afterwards as interpreter to Cortes, and an interpreter was so useful that it was looked upon as a miraculous interposition that the fleet had been obliged to return to Cozumel, and had thus secured, at the outset of their undertaking, the services of so valuable a comrade.

A favourable omen and a singular advantage.

It is worthy of notice that the inhabitants of Cozumel were found to worship an idol in the

shape of a cross.* This statement is amply confirmed by the discoveries recently made in Central America.†

Leaving Cozumel, and passing round the coast of Yucatan, Cortes made his entry at the river of Grijalva into New Spain. After some resistance from the natives, he disembarked, and took possession of the country in the name of the Spanish Monarch. Proceeding inland, he found that he was in a territory called Tabasco; and there occurred his first great battle with the natives. They behaved with the most conspicuous courage. Bernal Diaz says: "I recollect that, when we let off the guns, the Indians uttered loud cries, and whistling sounds, and threw earth and straw into the air, that we should not see the damage which we were doing to them; and then they sounded their trumpets, and uttered their cries, and said, 'Ala Tala.'" It appears that the Tabascans had some notion of an ambuscade; but all their military skill and prowess were of little avail against the horses and the cannon of the Spaniards. Many of the Spaniards were wounded

First battle with the Indians of New Spain, March 25, 1519.

* "En medio del qual havia una cruz de Cal, tan alta como diez palmos, á la qual tenian, í adoraban por Dios de la Lluvia." —Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 15.

"Era Cozumél el mayor Santuario para los indios que habia en este reino de Yucatan, y á donde recurrian en romeria de todo él por unas calzadas que le atravesaban todo, y hoy permanecen en muchas partes vestigios dellas." — Diego Lopez Cogolludo, *Historia de Yucatan*, lib. 1, cap. 6. Campeche, 1842.

† See Stephens's *Central America*, vol. 2, p. 345, where there is an engraving of a tablet at Palenque, in which two priests are making offerings to a highly ornamented cross.

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in this encounter, and two of them died of their wounds. Gomara speaks of Saint James having appeared in the battle on a white horse, but Bernal Diaz, while admitting that such might have been the case, says that "he, sinner as he was, was not worthy to be permitted to see it."

The battle of Cintla.

This battle was called the battle of Cintla; and to commemorate their success, the Spaniards changed the name of the chief town of the Tabascans from Potonchan to that of Santa Maria de la Vitoria.

The victory was of the utmost service to Cortes. It made the Tabascans submissive to him; and with other presents which they brought to the conqueror were twenty female slaves, whose business it was to make bread, and who carried with them the stones between which, after the Oriental fashion, they were accustomed to pound their maize. Amongst these Indian women was a person of great intelligence, who was destined to play a considerable part in the conquest of Mexico. The story of her life was a singular one. Though found in the condition of a slave, she was of high birth, being the daughter of a cacique who ruled over Painala as his principal *pueblo*, and possessed other dependent *pueblos*. Painala was in the Mexican province of Coatzacualco: she was accordingly able to speak Mexican. Her father died when she was but a girl, and her mother married another cacique, a young man. They had a son born to them, and wishing to secure the heritage for him, and to despoil her, they gave her by

Donna Marina: her early life.

night to some Indians of Xicalango, pretending to their own people that she had died. From these masters she passed, probably by sale, to the Tabascans, by whom, as we have seen, she was presented to Cortes. She was baptized as Marina, and afterwards served faithfully as an interpreter. Indeed, her fidelity was assured by the love which she bore to her master.

Her love for Cortes.

Cortes, who from the first showed himself intent upon conversion, placed a cross in the great temple of Potonchan; and, before his departure, celebrated, with what pomp he could, the feast of Palm Sunday, Padre Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo and the Licentiate Juan Diaz having endeavoured to instruct the Tabascans in the rudiments of Christianity. Gomara says that the Tabascans broke their idols and received the cross; but the account which a much later historian gives is the more probable one,—namely, that their docility was more inclined to receive another God than to renounce any one of their own.*

Immediately after his celebration of the feast of Palm Sunday, Cortes returned to his ships, and, continuing his voyage, arrived at San Juan de Ulua on Holy Thursday of the year 1519. A little incident occurred in the course of this voyage, very characteristic of the men and of the time. As they coasted along, keeping close to the shore, the former companions of De

Cortes arrives at San Juan de Ulua.

* "Pero solo se encontraba en ellos una docilidad de rendidos mas inclinada á recibir otro Dios, que á dexar alguno de los suyos." —De Solis, *Conquista de la Nueva-España*, lib. 1, cap. 20.

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Córdova and Grijalva kept pointing out to Cortes those parts of the coast with which they were familiar, naming this river, and that town, this mountain, and that headland. Remarking the conversation, a certain cavalier named Alonso Hernando de Puertocarrero, approached Cortes, and said, "It seems to me, Señor, that these gentlemen, who have been twice to this land, have been saying to you,

> "Cata Francia, Montesinos,
> Cata Paris, la ciudad,
> Cata las aguas de Duero
> Do van á dar en la mar."*

I say to you, observe these rich lands, and know well what to do." To which Cortes replied, "Let God give us good fortune in battle, as he gave the Paladin Roldan; for the rest, having such men as yourself and other cavaliers for captains, I shall know well what to do."†

It is possible that Puertocarrero did not make the allusion without a little touch of satire, but the words may also have conveyed a serious meaning, and appear to have been so construed by Cortes. It is one of the chief merits of a popular literature, whatever its kind, that it affords the means of so much being conveyed, when so little is said. Montesinos, in the Spanish romance

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* *Romances Caballerescos*, núm. 29. G. B. Depping, *Romancero Castellano.*

† "Yo digo, que mireis las tierras ricas, y sabè os bien governar. Luego Cortès bien entendiò á que fin fueron aquellas palabras dichas: y respondio: Dé nos Dios ventura en armas como al Paladin Roldan, que en lo demas, teniendo á v. m. y á otros Cavalleros por señores, bien me sabré entender."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 36.

alluded to, is the grandson of Charlemagne. His parents are banished from court, upon the suggestion of a false enemy named Tomillos. Montesinos is brought up in a hermit's cell; and, when the youth becomes complete in the knowledge of arms, his father takes him up to a lofty eminence, and there, without any affront to the geography of romances in the middle ages, points out to him, in the stanza quoted above, Paris and the Douro, the palace of the King, and the castle of his enemy, Tomillos. The youth goes to court, enters the hall of Charlemagne's palace, observes Tomillos cheating the King at a game of chess, points out the fraud, and eventually strikes the false player dead. He then discovers his own lineage, and is the means of restoring his parents to their former rank. There is a peculiar felicity in the date of the day on which the father of Montesinos shows Paris to his son,* which was the day of St. Juan, after whom, as well as in honour of Juan Grijalva, St. Juan de Ulua had been named.

The Montesinos of Romance.

It is a fancy of mine that Cortes unconsciously betrayed a little of his own character, in naming the Paladin Roldan as his hero. The crafty and valorous exploits of that knight are well described in a romance, which makes him have no scruple in allowing his beloved Donna Anna to suppose

Cortes not unlike the Paladin Roldan.

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* "A veinte y cuatro de Junio,
Dia era de san Juan,
Padre y hijo paseando
De la ermita se van."
—*Romances Caballerescos*, núm. 28. Depping, *Romancero Castellano.*

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that he is slain, in order that he might have his revenge upon the Knights of the Round Table; and where, disguised as a Moor, he takes the command of an army of Moors,* in order to betray them.

At San Juan de Ulua, Cortes met with a friendly reception from the natives; and shortly after his arrival, there came some Indians, sent by two high officers of a certain great King, named Montezuma, to enquire why he had made his appearance on that coast. The Spanish Commander replied, that he had come to treat with their Prince upon matters of great importance, and he asked to see these officers. They accordingly advanced to meet him,—listened to his story, that the cause of his coming was to treat with their master on the part of Don Charles of Austria, Monarch of the East,—and they made him rich presents; but they entirely put aside any hope of his being allowed to see their Sovereign. Cortes replied, that kings always received ambassadors, and that he was resolved not to quit the country without seeing Montezuma. At this declaration, they were so alarmed, that they offered to send to their Monarch for an answer; and, as these officers of Montezuma were accompanied by skilful painters, who depicted with accuracy all that they saw amongst the

His interview with Montezuma's officers.

Mexican painters.

* See the romance beginning—

"Dia era de san Jorge,
Dia de gran festividad,
Aquel dia por mas honor
Los doce se van á armar."

—*Romances Caballerescos*, núm. 12. Depping, *Romancero Castellano.*

Spaniards, they were able to convey a full representation of what had occurred to their Monarch.

The alert mind of Cortes, anxious to adopt every opportunity for impressing the Mexicans (that was the name of the people over whom Montezuma ruled) with a sense of his power, prepared a review for the officers of the King, and an additional subject for the artists. He ordered the cannon to be heavily charged, and all his horsemen, under the command of Pedro de Alvarado, to prepare for exercise. The horses were to have on their poitrals, with bells attached to them. "If we could have a charge upon the sand-hills," he said, "it would be good; but they will see that we sink into the mire. Let us repair to the shore when the tide is going out, and make a charge there, going two abreast." This cavalry movement was accordingly executed in presence of Montezuma's officers. Then came the principal show of the day. The cannon were discharged, and the stone-balls went re-echoing over the hills* with a great noise, which was the better heard, as it happened to be a calm day. All these things were represented by the Mexican painters as best they could; and never, perhaps,

A review in the presence of Montezuma's officers.

* This is an instance of a considerable difficulty which occurs from a double meaning of a Spanish word. "El monte" means a "wood," and also a "mountain," or "hill;" and frequently it requires the minutest knowledge of geography to know how the word should be rendered. In the present instance the passage is *iban las piedras por los montes retumbando con gran ruido.* — Bernal Diaz, cap. 38. From the nature of the coast, I have adopted the rendering in the text, though not without some doubts as to its propriety.

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in the history of the world, was there brought to a monarch such a picture of the destruction that impended over his kingdom. The awful writing in the hall of Belshazzar was not more significant than this picture would have been to Montezuma, could he rightly have appreciated all that it depicted.

After an entertainment which Cortes gave to these officers of Montezuma, he had another conversation with them, through his interpreters, Geronimo de Aguilar and Donna Marina, in the course of which he asked if the Mexican King had any gold, and being answered in the affirmative, he said, "Let him send it me, for I and my companions have a complaint, a disease of the heart, which is cured by gold."

An answer came back from Montezuma in seven days, and was brought by Teotlili, one of the officers who had before met Cortes. He brought with him magnificent presents from the King, and, amongst other things, a sun of gold, which he laid before Cortes, informing him that Montezuma sent these things to show how he estimated the friendship of that king (Charles the Fifth), but in the present state of affairs, it was "not convenient" to allow Cortes to present himself at the Mexican court. Certainly, from the official style of this reply, we may conjecture that the Mexicans had reached a high state of what is called civilization.

Montezuma declines to receive Cortes.

Cortes received the presents with all due deference; but said that it would be impossible for him to desist from his undertaking. The

Cortes perseveres.

honour of his King forbade it. This he said so angrily, that the officers of Montezuma offered to send again to their Sovereign for instructions, and they did so. Meanwhile, Cortes despatched Francisco de Montejo, accompanied by the celebrated pilot Anton Alaminos, to seek a port that might be a better station for them than the present one, which was a barren and desert place vexed by mosquitoes. They returned with the intelligence that they had found a port twelve leagues off, close to a fortress named Chiahuitzla.

Montezuma again refuses.

Montezuma resolved not to receive these strangers; and a more peremptory answer than the last, but accompanied, like it, with presents, was conveyed by Teotlili to Cortes. It happened to be evening time, when the Spanish Commander was about to reply to this second message, and the Ave Maria bell was heard from that vessel in the squadron which served as a church. The Spaniards fell on their knees to pray; Teotlili enquired from Marina what this meant, and Cortes thought it a good occasion to commence the work of conversion, which, to do him justice, was always in his mind. For this purpose he brought forward Father Bartolomé de Olmedo, who endeavoured to give Teotlili some insight into the mysteries of the Catholic Faith, and into the nature of his own idolatry. Then Cortes continued the discourse, intimating that conversion was one of the chief objects of his Sovereign; and that, having come so far on such a great affair from so mighty a king, he must per-

Cortes persists.

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severe in his attempt. The Mexican ambassador, in much anger and confusion, broke off the conference.

The next morning there were no Indians to assist the Spaniards and to bring them food. The friends of the Governor Velazquez murmured against Cortes, and Diego de Ordaz told him that the army was averse to proceeding, and that the means at his disposal were not sufficient for the conquest of such an empire as Montezuma's. Cortes replied by dwelling on the success which had hitherto attended the expedition; but admitted, that if the soldiers were so disheartened as Ordaz asserted, it would be madness to attempt such an enterprize, and that they must consider about their return to Cuba. He, accordingly, published an order for the return of the fleet to that island.

Proclamation for return to Cuba.

It must not be supposed that Cortes took this important step without having thoroughly prepared for it, by sounding his chief partizans as to the course they were inclined to take, and, probably, conveying to them his own wishes. The way in which the camp was split into two factions, and the underhand negociations that went on, cannot be better seen and appreciated than by the short account which Bernal Diaz gives of what happened to himself. "One night, a little after midnight, came to my hut Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero, Juan de Escalante, and Francisco de Lugo (Lugo and I were, in some sort, relations, and from the same country), and they said to me: 'Señor Bernal Diaz del Castillo, come

The partizans of Cortes combine.

hither with your arms to go the rounds, for we will accompany Cortes, who is making the rounds.' And when I was at some little distance from the hut, they said to me: 'Look, Señor; keep secret for a little time that which we are going to tell you, for it is of much importance, and your companions in the hut may not hear it, who are of the faction of Diego Velazquez.' And what they said to me was the following. 'Does it seem good to you, Señor, that Hernando Cortes should have brought us all here under a delusion, and given out proclamations in Cuba that he was coming to make a settlement, and now we have learnt that he has no authority for that, but only for trading; and they wish (the change of person may here be noted) that we should return to Santiago with all the gold that has been taken, in which case we should all be ruined men, and Diego Velazquez would take the gold as he did before?'"

They confer with Bernal Diaz secretly at night.

They then reminded Bernal Diaz that he had been three times in that land and had gained nothing, and they ended their address to him by suggesting that they should agree to form a settlement in the name of His Majesty, the Emperor, that they should elect Cortes as Captain, and inform His Majesty of what they had done.

It was not possible that these private dealings could go on unobserved by the opposite faction. A camp is not a cabinet, and secrets leak out even from a cabinet. The followers of Velazquez protested against such underhand proceedings; but their protestations were too late. When the

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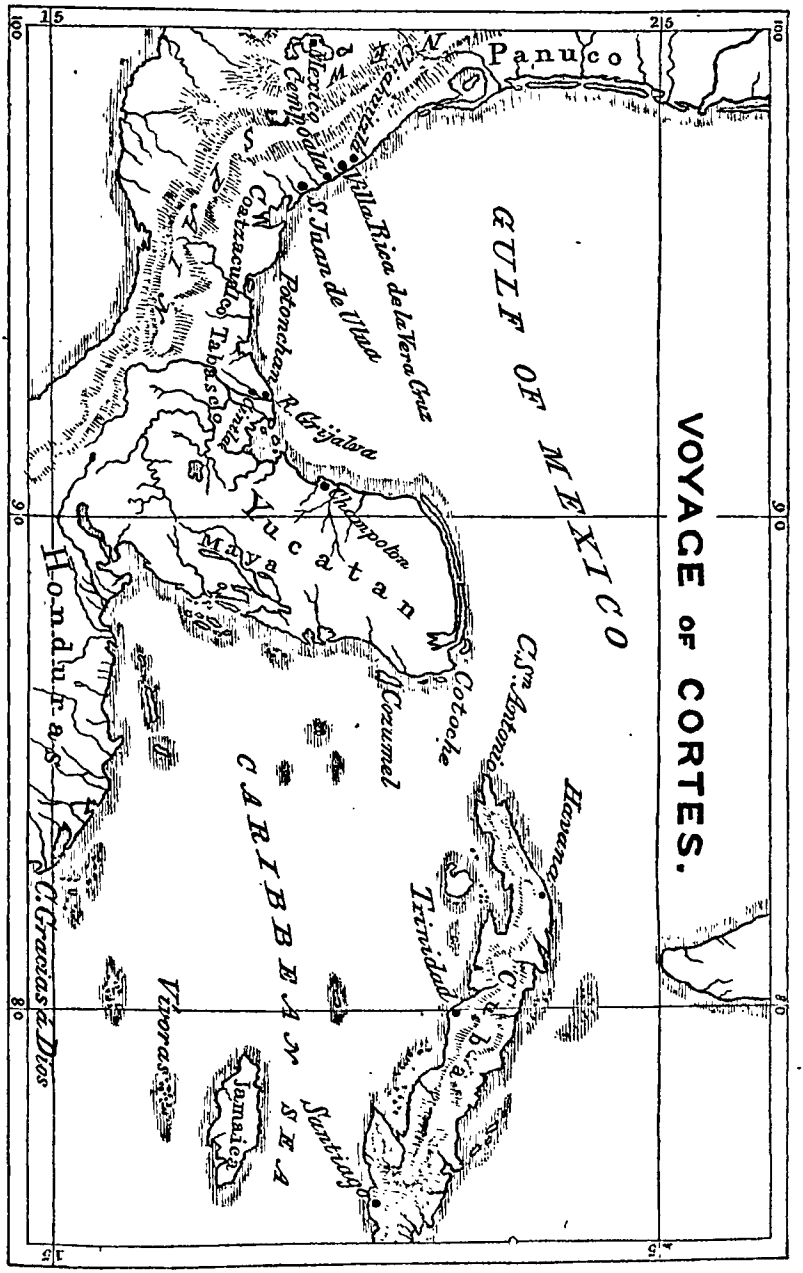
proclamation for return was made known to the soldiers, they became furious with Cortes, and declared that they would not go back to Cuba. It was remembered how ill Grijalva had been received by Velazquez, because he had returned without founding any settlement. Uttering such complaints as they were fairly entitled to make, they came into the presence of Cortes. This crafty leader had his followers now exactly in the position in which he must have desired to see them. He affected a difficulty in acceding to their wishes, and the tone which he adopted on the occasion is well described, by one who heard him, in the words of the sly proverb, "You may entreat me to do that which I like to do" (*tu me lo ruegas, y yo me lo quiero*). A speech has been made for him* which probably does not differ much in substance from that which he really uttered. He tells the clamorous malcontents of his having been informed that it was their desire to go: to please them he had yielded; but he was glad to find them in a disposition more fitting for the service of their King and the duty of good Spaniards; however, as he did not wish to have unwilling soldiers, it must now be understood, that whoever desired to return to Cuba could do so, and that he would provide for the embarkation of all those who would not voluntarily follow his fortunes.

Cortes is pleased to be persuaded by his men.

Just at this period, or a little before, when Cortes and his companions were feeling somewhat

* De Solis, *Conquista de la Nueva-España*, lib. 2, cap. 6.


VOYAGE OF CORTES.
GULF OF MEXICO
CARIBBEAN SEA
Panuco
Mexico
Chichuitla
Cempoala
Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz
S. Juan de Ulua
Coatzacualco
Tabasco
Potonchan
R. Grijalva
Yucatan
Champoton
Maya
Honduras
C. Gracias á Dios
Cozumel
Cotoche
C. Sn. Antonio
Havana
Trinidad
Cuba
Santiago
Jamaica
Viboras

desolate and disheartened, there came messengers from the chief of a neighbouring territory, called Cempoala, desiring the friendship of the Spaniards. The town of Cempoala was on the way to Chiahuitzla, that port of which Cortes had heard from those he had sent out to discover one. A proceeding now took place which deserves the attention of the world at the present day, and which many a modern nation might well imitate in its attempts to colonize. Cortes began to take steps for founding his town,—not, however, by choosing a spot of ground, and commencing to build upon it, but by selecting the men who were to fill the chief offices in the town. Certainly, it would appear as if, in those ages, they had more belief in men, and appreciated more the difference of one man from another, than the world does now.

The Chief of Cempoala invites Cortes.

A good mode of founding a town.

Cortes had no intention of making his settlement at, or near, San Juan de Ulua, but at Chiahuitzla, where he had heard of tolerable anchorage. A Spanish town, however, was somewhat like a Roman camp:* there were certain

* "The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city. As soon as the space was marked out, the pioneers carefully levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity. Its form was an exact quadrangle; and we may calculate, that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would expose to the enemy a front of more than treble that extent. In the midst of the camp, the prætorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries, occupied their respective stations; the streets were broad, and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides, between the

fixed points in it, and the difficulty was, not so much what should be done, as who should be appointed to do it.

Cortes first took solemn and official possession of the country in the name of the Emperor. He then named his town, which at present existed only on paper, calling it "La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz."* He then appointed the requisite officers. It appears, too, that either he, or his party, suggested, that a formal requisition should be made to him, apparently in writing, demanding in a most peremptory manner that the main object of the expedition should be changed from that of trade to that of colonization; and that he should take upon himself to appoint the *Alcaldes* and *Regidors* of the new town.† The Alcaldes named

Change of plan in the Expedition.

tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves; to whom the use of the spade and the pickaxe was no less familiar than that of the sword or pilum." —Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. I, cap. I.

* "Porque el Viérnes de la Cruz havia entrado en aquella Tierra."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 30.

† "Y acordado esto nos juntamos todos en concordes de un ánimo y voluntad, y hicimos un requerimiento al dicho capitan en el cual dijimos que pues él veia cuanto al servicio de Dios nuestro Señor y al de vuestras Majestades convenia que esta tierra estuviese poblada, dándole las causas de que arriba á vuestras Altezas se ha hecho relacion, que le requerimos que luego cesase de hacer rescates de la manera que los venia á hacer porque seria destruir la tierra en mucha manera, y vuestras Majestades serian en ello muy deservidos, y que ansí mismo le pedimos y requerimos que luego nombrase para aquella villa que se habia por nosotros de hacer y fundar, alcaldes y regidores en nombre de vuestras Reales Altezas con ciertas protestaciones en forma que contra él protestamos si ansí no lo hiciese."—*Doc. Inéd.*, tom. I, p. 448.

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were Alonso Hernandez Puertocarrero (a native of Medellin, the birthplace of Cortes) and Francisco de Montejo. The Regidors were Alonso Davila, Pedro de Alvarado, with his brother Alonso, and Gonsalo de Sandoval, also a native of Medellin, a young man of twenty-two, who will afterwards take a great part in the conquest. Juan de Escalante was appointed the *Alguazil Mayor*. Cristoval de Olid was to be the Master of the Camp (*el Maestro del Campo*). There were other minor appointments which need not be recorded. No one who knows anything of Cortes needs to be told that these appointments were skilfully made, affording due encouragement to his friends, and offering the requisite temptation to those amongst his enemies who might be gained over.

Cortes names the chief officers of Vera Cruz.

The foundations for authority were now laid, and we must own that the deficiency of original authority was endeavoured to be supplied in the most skilful manner. Recounting the various steps in due order, we find that it was voted universally, or at least determined by the majority, that the object of the expedition, as stated in the original instructions (of the purport of which they had not been aware), must be entirely changed, and accordingly that these instructions did not apply to the changed circumstances. Then, the process may be summed up as follows: Cortes rises from the mass as their chosen leader; and, at their request, appoints officers. When these are appointed, he recognizes their authority to the utmost extent. He appears bare-headed before

The process by which authority is brought into due form and shape.

them, and renounces his authority of Captain-General and Justicia-Mayor, placing it in the hands of the *Alcaldes* and *Regidors*. He then quits the assembled officers of government, leaving them to confer amongst themselves. They, as might be expected, resolve upon reappointing him; and the next morning come to him, to make their determination formally known,—which intelligence he receives with proper official gravity, as if it were some new thing to him.* He is pleased to accept the appointment, and they are allowed to kiss the hands of the new Captain-General and Justicia-Mayor, who is thus placed with some show of legality, at the head of the military and the civil services.

Cortes reappointed as Captain-general and Justicia-mayor.

In the midst of all these proceedings, Cortes had not forgotten the friendly invitation which he had received from the Cacique of Cempoala; and, indeed, he is stated to have made use of this invitation as an argument to show that there were alliances which might be formed against the Mexicans, and people with whom he might negociate, when he had once made a settlement.† Nothing, therefore, could be more fortunate than this offer of welcome from Cempoala, which Cortes did not fail in due time to embrace; and, marching

Cortes enters Cempoala.

* "El Dia siguiente, de mañana, el Regimiento fué á buscar á Hernando Cortés, el qual, como si nada supiera de el caso, preguntó, qué era lo que mandaban?" —Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 2, lib. 5, cap. 7.

† "I aun tambien para desde allí poder con mas facilidad tener amistad, í Contratacion, con algunos Indios, í Pueblos Comarcanos, como era Cempoallan, í otros, que havia Contrarios, í Enemigos de la Gente de Motecçuma."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 30.

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to their town, was very kindly received. Thence he moved on to Chiahuitzla, still in the same territory, where also he was well received by order of the Cacique of Cempoala. Near to Chiahuitzla, Cortes, working with his own hands, founded his town of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz;* and the appointed officers took charge of it. This town

Begins to build Vera Cruz.

was of much importance to Cortes: it was a stronghold in the rear, and Juan de Escalante, who had the chief command, was a devoted friend, on whom Cortes could rely.

The town being now founded, it was resolved,

* See the proceedings (mentioned in Gomara, cap. 37, and incidentally confirmed by Chimalpain and Bustamante, cap. 35,) in reference to the actual building of the town, when sites were marked out for the church, the grand square, the town hall, the wharf, and the shambles; and the town was called Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, *as they had agreed when the Council of St. Juan de Ulua was nominated* (como havian acordado, quando se nombró el Cabildo de San Juan de Ulhua).

in full council, that information should be sent to Charles the Fifth of what had been done; and the two alcaldes, Alonso Hernandez de Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo, were chosen for this purpose. They went to Spain, carrying rich gifts with them, but unfortunately found the Emperor absent, and were ill received by the Bishop of Burgos, the head of the colonial administration, who favoured Velazquez, and considered these messengers as persons who had been concerned in a revolt against the constituted authorities.

Sends messengers to Spain.

Meanwhile, Cortes did not hesitate to use his newly-acquired authority with vigour, and discovering a conspiracy which was formed by some of the party of Velazquez to leave the army, and to give information to that Governor which might enable him to seize the messengers of Cortes on their way to Spain, he caused two of the principal conspirators to be put to death, and inflicted minor punishments upon the others. "I remember," says Bernal Diaz, "that when Cortes signed that sentence, he said with deep sighs and signs of suffering, 'Oh! who would not be ignorant of writing, so that he might not have to sign the death-warrants of men.'"*

Discovers a conspiracy, and punishes the conspirators.

It was during his stay in the territory of Cempoala, that Cortes adopted that determination to destroy his fleet, and so to cut off all means of retreat from his army, which has become one

Resolves to destroy his fleet.

* "Acuérdome, que quando Cortés firmó aquella sentencia dixo con grandes suspiros y sentimiento: O quién no supiera escrivir, para no firmar muertes de hombres!"—Bernal Diáz, cap. 57.

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of the great texts in history. I say "adopted," because though Cortes himself may have originated the idea of destroying the fleet, and then have insinuated it into the minds of his adherents,* it is certain that they also counselled the destruction of the fleet. There were many good reasons for this counsel. It was necessary to bind the two factions together in some indissoluble manner. Again, in such a small body, where every man was valuable, the sailors were an important addition to the little army. Even those who were disabled men, or unsuited for a marching expedition, sufficed for garrison duty in the new town of Vera Cruz. The magnanimity of the transaction is diminished by its evident policy; and, with regard to Cortes himself, it required no extraordinary valour on his part. He had cut off all retreat for himself, when he refused to allow himself to be superseded by the orders of Velazquez. For Cæsar, to pass the Rubicon might have been a great resolve, but for his soldiers, nothing: in the destruction of this Spanish fleet, the men incurred a danger, which their Commander had already brought upon himself, and thus reduced themselves to the level of his own desperation. Juan de Escalante was entrusted with the execution of the orders that Cortes gave for the fleet's destruction, which,

Obvious motives for destroying the fleet.

* "Platicando con Cortés en las cosas de la guerra, y camino para adelante, de plática en plática le aconsejámos los que eramos sus amigos, que no dexasse navío en el puerto ninguno."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 58.

after the anchors, sails, and cables had been taken out, was summarily effected.

Cortes continued to maintain a strict amity with the Cempoalans; it was in an expedition that the Spaniards made, while in this territory, that he caused a man to be hanged for stealing two fowls. The man was cut down, however, when half dead, by Alvarado.

While Cortes was in Cempoala, Montezuma's collectors of tribute came into the country. The Cempoalans complained much of the Mexican King's exactions, saying that he demanded their children for slaves and for sacrifices. Cortes seized the officers, and ordered that no tribute should be paid. But, privately, he let two of them go free with a peaceful message to Montezuma, and the others he preserved from the fury of the Cempoalans, who, when they had overcome their terror of the great King's officers, by seeing them imprisoned, were very desirous to turn the tables upon these Mexicans, and to offer them up as a sacrifice to the local divinities.

Cortes frees the Cempoalans from tribute to Mexico.

This is one of many instances which show the vigour and crafty wisdom of Cortes, in his preparations for the conquest of Mexico. Indeed, his conduct at this period of his fortunes might be taken as a model by all those who may be placed in similar circumstances. As a snake through tangled grass and herbage, or rather, like an agile wild beast through the forest, now lightly leaping over the brushwood, now bounding along the open space under great trees, always with an

The policy of Cortes.

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eye to prey, always with a soft footfall, so did the politic Cortes move through the difficulties which beset his position,—the wilds of dubious followers, the snares of uncertain allies, the perils of an unknown country, and the weight of countless numbers brought to bear upon his little band, which was but the scenic counterfeit of an army.

Cortes attacks idolatry in Cempoala.

These sacrifices of human beings, which the Mexicans and the Cempoalans were so ready to inflict upon each other, were an abomination to Cortes; and he resolved to put an end to them in this province, and, indeed, to the whole scheme of idolatry of the Cempoalans; which he accomplished by main force, sending a body of troops to hurl the idols down from the temple. The use of violence, if ever justifiable in matters of religion, is so in warring against a cruel creed which has for its groundwork the fears of men, and is perpetually cemented by the blood of the weak amongst its worshippers. It was not, however, to be supposed that a people who had been oppressed by a malign religion for so many years would part with their burden easily. The most galling fetters come to be believed in as amulets, mistaken for ornaments, and fondly clung to as supports. Accordingly, the Cempoalans rushed to arms, that they might avenge this insult to their gods. But Cortes, whose Violence, being for the most part the violence of the head, was never far removed from her severe, but serene sister, Policy, took the precaution at once to seize upon the Cacique and the principal chiefs, and to declare that they should be put to death if any

Cempoalans take up arms for their gods.

outrage was attempted against the Spaniards. The threat was successful; and the people were pacified, or rather awed into submission. Cortes then had the walls of the temple cleared of blood. He erected an altar there, changed the priests' vestments from black to white, and gave *them* (what policy again!) the charge of this altar. He also set up a cross, and taught the natives to make wax candles, and to keep them burning before the altar.

The next step of Cortes was to receive the Cempoalans into the vassalage of the King of Spain. Certainly this man's audacity throughout borders upon the ludicrous; and the way in which the strange tale was first told, in grave official documents, does not diminish to an intelligent reader the grotesque wildness of the transactions, though narrated as if they were mere matters of course.

On the 16th of August, 1519, Cortes set off for Mexico, resolved to see, in the quaint language of the unsuspected historian who accompanied him, "what sort of a thing the great Montezuma was* of whom they had heard so much."

Cortes commences his march to Mexico, August 16, 1519.

Cortes himself had already assured his Sovereign that he would take Montezuma, dead or alive, if he did not bring him into vassalage to the Spanish crown.†

This is not the place for giving any more than

* "Que seria bueno ir á ver que cosa era el gran Monteçuma." —Bernal Diaz, cap. 53.

† "En la otra Relacion, * * * certifiqué á Vuestra Alteza, que lo habría preso ó muerto, ó Súbdito á la Corona Real de Vuestra Magestad."—Lorenzana, p. 39.

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a very rapid account of the advance of Cortes; but, as the nature and extent of his successes bear closely on the subject of this history, it will be advisable to show what were the advantages which each side possessed.

Comparative means of the belligerents.

The Mexicans had immense superiority in point of numbers. They were not, like the Indians of the islands, a people living in huts, but in good, stone-built edifices. They formed a mighty kingdom, mighty at least in appearance, with dependent states, that paid tribute to the King of Mexico, but which, as soon appeared, were by no means devoted to him. The weapons of the Mexicans were lances, darts, bows and arrows,* slings and stones, and a kind of sword of a most fearful nature and aspect.†

Weapons of the Mexicans.

* "It was usual for a number of archers to assemble together, and throw up an ear of maize into the air, at which they immediately shot with such quickness and dexterity, that before it could reach the ground it was stripped of every grain."—Clavigero's *History of Mexico*, book 7, p. 367—note.

† "The *Maquahuitl*, called by the Spaniards *Spada*, or sword, as it was the weapon among the Mexicans, which was equivalent to the sword of the old continent, was a stout stick, three feet and a half long, and about four inches broad, armed on each side with a sort of razors of the stone *itzli* (obsidian), extraordinarily sharp, fixed and firmly fastened to the stick with gum lack, which were about three inches long, one or two inches broad, and as thick as the blade of our ancient swords. This weapon was so keen, that once it entirely beheaded a horse at one stroke, according to the affirmation of Acosta; but the first stroke only was to be feared; for the razors became soon blunt. They tied this weapon by a string

I have recounted the means on the Mexican side, which consisted of innumerable men, who, as it proved afterwards, possessed a fierce and pertinacious bravery like that of the Jews—weapons of offence which would not have been contemptible anywhere in a previous age, but which were becoming so amongst Europeans in the sixteenth century*—a consolidated kingdom, of which the capital, at any rate, was devoted to its sovereign—and substantial edifices.†

On his side Cortes had valiant captains, trained

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to their arm, lest they might lose it in any violent conflict."—Clavigero, *Hist. of Mexico*, book 7, p. 367. These are the words of Acosta: "Sus armas eran unas navajas agudas de pedernales puestas de una parte y de otra de un baston, y era esta arma tan furiosa, que afirman que de un golpe echavan con ella la cabeça de un cavallo abaxo cortando toda la cerviz." — *Hist. Nat. y Moral de Indias*, lib. 6, cap. 26.—The engraving in the text is a representation of this formidable weapon.

* On the other hand, their defensive armour was good, though not to be compared to that of the Spaniards.

† It has been said, that "the victories of Cortes had been gained over savages who had no letters, who were ignorant of the use of metals, who had not broken in a single animal to labour, who wielded no better weapons than those which could be made out of sticks, flints, and fish-bones, who regarded a horse-soldier as a monster, half man and half beast, who took an arquebusier for a sorcerer, able to scatter the thunder and lightning of the skies."—Mr. Macaulay's *Essay on Lord Clive.*

These weapons, however, could hardly have been as contemptible as they are thus represented, for we find that, at the first discharge of missiles in the first battle with Cortes, the Indians wounded seventy men, two of them fatally. Neither is it much to their discredit, that they did not break in animals to labour, as there were none for them to break in. Now that they possess horses, there are no people in the world more expert with them, as may be seen in the case of those who make use of the lasso. Had the Mexicans possessed horses in those days, there would not have been the slightest chance for the Spaniards, unless they had come in large armies, in which case the difficulty of finding supplies would have been almost an insuperable obstacle.

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The means which Cortes had at his command.

men-at-arms, a small park of artillery, these wonderful horses, and his own dissembling mind and vast audacity—cut off from all retreat. The difficulties, however, in his own camp, which his uncertain position created for him, were very great; and his enterprize, considered in all respects, was, perhaps, as difficult as any feat of arms the world has ever contemplated.

CHAPTER III.

CORTES MARCHES TO TLASCALA—GREAT BATTLE WITH THE TLASCALANS—THE TLASCALAN SENATE ALLIES ITSELF TO CORTES—CORTES ENTERS CHOLULA—THE GREAT MASSACRE THERE—FIRST SIGHT OF MEXICO—CORTES ENTERS MEXICO—DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY.

THE next step which Cortes took was to march towards the territory of Tlascala. His friends at Cempoala had informed him that the people of that territory were friends of theirs, and very especial enemies (*muy capitales enemigos*) of Montezuma. The Tlascalan form of government was republican, and Cortes compares it to those of Genoa, Venice, and Pisa.* Before his approach, he sent four Cempoalans to the senate of Tlascala, telling the senate that he was coming through their country on his way to Mexico, that he had freed the Cempoalans from Montezuma's yoke, and that he wished to know what grievance the senate had against the Mexicans, that he might make the Tlascalan cause his own. Such, at

Cortes marches on towards Tlascala.

Form of the Tlascalan government.

Message of Cortes.

* "La órden que hasta ahora se ha alcanzado, que la gente de ella tiene en gobernarse, es casi como las Señorías de Venecia, y Génova, ó Pisa; porque no hay Señor general de todos."—Lorenzana, p. 59.

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least, it is likely was the substance of what Cortes wrote to the Tlascalans.

Debate in the Senate.

The Tlascalan senate received this crafty message, or whatever part the ambassadors (who probably spoke on behalf of their own nation) chose to report of it, and proceeded to debate upon the subject. One great chief advised friendship with the Spaniards, as being a race more like gods than men, who would force their way even if the Tlascalans should oppose them. It would be wise, therefore, to accept their friendship, and to make alliance with them against the common enemy, Montezuma. These arguments he strengthened by appeals to omens and prophecies. Another senator said that the Spaniards were like some monstrous beasts cast upon the sea-shore. He lightly put aside the omens, on account of their incertitude. He probably appealed to what the Spaniards had already done—mentioned their demands for gold, and, no doubt, if he were aware of it, described the indignities they had offered to the gods of the country,—undoubted deities in his eyes, whatever the new comers might be.* His voice was for war: and such was the decision of the assembly,—as indeed might have been expected from the chiefs of a nation so jealous of interference that they had

Magiscatzin's counsel.

Xicotencatl's counsel.

The Tlascalans resolve on war.

* I will not by any means be answerable for the exactitude of these speeches. There are more elaborate ones given in Torquemada, Herrera, and Clavigero,—all manifestly proceeding from one source, and tinged, I think, by a Spanish colour. I have no doubt, however, that great speeches were made on the occasion.

denied themselves the use of salt, because it came from Montezuma's country, and they were unwilling to have more intercourse with the Mexicans than they could help.

Notwithstanding the opposition to be expected from the Tlascalans, Cortes persevered in making his entrance into their country, and had to fight his way thither. After three or four severe engagements, in one of which, as he tells us, he had to encounter one hundred and forty-nine thousand adversaries,* "who covered the whole country,"† he at last succeeded in bringing the Tlascalans to terms. But this object was not attained before the Tlascalan General (Xicotencatl) had made great efforts, by craft as well as force, to overcome the Spaniards. An incident worth recording occurred when the Tlascalans sent certain spies to the camp of Cortes. These spies, forty in number, had as a pretext for their coming, that they brought provisions to the camp, and certain victims (four miserable old women) for sacrifice. When the forty spies arrived, they began to sprinkle incense upon Cortes, and then

Cortes brings them to terms.

* It may a little diminish the surprize of the reader, at such extraordinary numbers being met and vanquished by the small army of Cortes, to find that they attacked in battalions of only 20,000 men. — "Heureusement pour Cortez, les Tlaxcaltèques ne les attaquèrent pas tous à la fois, mais par bataillons de vingt mille hommes qui se succédaient les uns aux autres à mesure qu'ils étaient repoussés. Le combat dura deux jours, et les Espagnols ayant tué, sans perdre un seul homme, une quantité de Tlaxcaltèques, ceux-ci se persuadèrent qu'ils étaient enchantés ou qu'ils étaient des dieux."—Ixtlilxochitl, *Hist. des Chichimèques*, chap. 83. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

† "Que cubrian toda la tierra."—Lorenzana, p. 52.

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they explained their embassage in the following words: "Our Captain Xicotencatl sends you this present, which, if you are *teules*,* as those of Cempoala say, you will eat, and if you wish sacrifices, take these four women and sacrifice them, and you can eat of their flesh and their hearts. We have not hitherto sacrificed before you, as we did not know your manner of sacrifice. And if you are men, eat of these fowls and bread and fruit. If, however, you are benignant *teules*, we bring you incense and parrots' feathers; make your sacrifice with these things." Cortes replied, that it was not the custom of the Spaniards to put any one to death for sacrifice, and, besides, as long as the Tlascalans made war upon him, there were enough of them to slay. Afterwards, discovering the stratagem, he cut off the hands or thumbs of seventeen of the spies, and sent them back thus maimed to their Captain. At last messengers of peace did come from the Tlascalans, and their desire for alliance with Cortes must in no respect have been diminished by the arrival, about this time, of ambassadors from Montezuma, who came bringing new presents, and offering, as Cortes says in his letter to Charles the Fifth, vassalage on the part of Montezuma to that Monarch.

The Tlascalan spies bring food and a sacrifice.

The things most to be noted, in the march of Cortes from Cempoala to Tlascala, are the populousness and signs of civilization which he meets

* Minor deities.—"Nos tenian por Teules, que son como sus idolos."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 72.

with, and his own vigorous sagacity. At one point of his march he comes upon a valley* where, for four successive leagues, there was a continuous line of houses, and the Lord of the valley lived in a fortress such as was not to be found in the half of Spain, surrounded by walls and barbacans and moats.† He also came upon

Populousness of a district through which Cortes passes.

the great wall of Tlascala, which was nine feet high, and twenty feet broad, with a battlement a foot and a half in breadth. This wall was six miles long, and had an entrance constructed like a ravelin of that day.‡

The great wall of Tlascala.

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* The valley of Yztacmastitán.

† "El Señorío de este, serán tres, ó quatro leguas de poblacion, sin salir Casa de Casa, por lo llano del Valle, Ribera de un Rio pequeño, que vá por él: y en un Cerro muy alto está la Casa del Señor, con la mejor Fortaleza que hay en la mitad de España, y mejor cercada de Muro, y Barbacanas, y Cabas."—Lorenzana, p. 48.

‡ "É á la salida del dicho Valle, fallé una gran Cerca de

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Cortes not to be dismayed by omens.

The vigorous sagacity of Cortes was shown in his resolution to listen to no bad omen, considering, as he says, that God is above Nature*—in not being dismayed by the faint-heartedness of some of his companions, whom he overhears declaring that he is mad, and that they will return without him,—and in the ready craft with which he penetrates and defeats the plans of the Tlascalans, who thought to surprize him by a night attack.

The diplomacy of Cortes.

The Tlascalans endeavoured to set Cortes against the Mexicans: the Mexican ambassadors did all they could to make him distrust the Tlascalans. It was a situation eminently suited to the genius of that crafty conqueror; and, he says, it gave him much pleasure to see their discord, for it seemed to further his design, and he recollected the saying in the Scriptures, that "a kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation," and was fortified by the secular proverb, "From the wood comes the man who is to burn it."† "In secret," he says, "I thanked each party for the advice which they offered me,

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piedra seca, tan alta como estado, y medio, que atravesaba todo el Valle de la una Sierra á la otra, y tan ancha como veinte piés: y por toda ella un Petril de pié, y medio de ancho, para pelear desde encima: y no mas de una entrada tan ancha como diez pasos, y en esta entrada doblaba la una Cerca sobre la otra á manera de Revelin, tan estrecho como quarenta pasos."—Lorenzana, p. 49.

* "É aunque todos los de mi Compañía decían, que me tornasse, porque era mala señal, todavia seguí mi camino, considerando, que Dios es sobre natura."—Lorenzana, p. 54.

† "Del monte sale quien el monte quema."—Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 33, cap. 4.

and gavė each of them credit (*i. e.*, in words) for more friendship towards me than the other."*

Meanwhile, with the consent, and, indeed, upon the entreaty, of the Tlascalan chiefs, he had entered the town of Tlascala† on the 18th of September, 1520. He was received with every demonstration of affection and regard by the Tlascalans. Their priests, as he entered the town, sprinkled incense upon him and his soldiers. As, however, they were repulsive-looking creatures, with matted hair,‡ from which dripped blood (their own blood, for they were very cruel§ to themselves), their incensing must have been much more of a horror than a pleasure, and it must have been a great relief to have seen the hideous priests file off, and the Indian girls approach with

Cortes enters Tlascala. Sept. 18.

Favourable reception of Cortes.

* "Vista la discordia, y desconformidad de los unos, y de los otros, no huve poco placer, porque me pareció hacer mucho á mi propósito, y que podría tener manera de mas ayna sojuzgarlos, y que se dijesse aquel comun decir *de Monte, &c.*, é aun acordéme de una autoridad Evangélica, que dice: *Omne Regnum in seipsum divisum desolabitur:* y con los unos, y con los otros maneaba, y á cada uno en secreto le agradecía el aviso, que me daba, y le daba crédito de mas amistad que al otro."—Lorenzana, p. 61.

† "Tlaxcallan, quiere decir Pan Coçido, ó cosa de Pan."—Gomara, *Crónica*, cap. 55.

‡ "Traian vestidos algunos dellos ropas muy largas, a manera de sobrepellizes, y eran blancas, y traian capillas en ellos como que querian parecer á las que traen los Canónigos, como ya lo tengo dicho, y los cabellos muy largos y enredados, que no se pueden desparcir, sino se cortan, y llenos de sangre, que les salian dẽ las orejas, que en aquel dia se avian sacrificado."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 75.

§ "Era frequente, e d'ogni giorno, l'effusion di sangue in alcuni Sacerdoti, ed a questi davano il nome di *Tlamacazqui*. Pungevansi colle acutissime spine del magnei, e foravansi parecchie parti del corpo, massimamente l'orecchie, le labbra, la lingua, e la polpa delle gambe, e della braccia."—Clavigero, *Storia Antica del Messico*, tom. 2, lib. 6, p. 52.

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little pyramids* of roses, which they offered to the principal captains. When the Tlascalans had sought the Spanish General's friendship, they told him what struggles they had always made to maintain their independence. They had, however, fought him by night, and fought him by day, and had been compelled to confess their inferiority. When they had once confessed this to him, and had sought his friendship, it seems as if they had thoroughly thrown aside all enmity, and meant to abide by the friendly words they uttered.

The town and market of Tlascala.

Their town was worthy of the intelligence of its inhabitants. Cortes says that it was much larger and much stronger than Granada, and contained far more people† than that town at the time of the Moorish Conquest. There was a daily market, frequented by thirty thousand persons: which could boast, among its wares, of gold, silver, precious stones, earthenware equal to the best in Spain at that time, wood, charcoal, and medicines. As a proof of the civilization of the Tlascalans, we may notice that they had public baths. Their houses were built of bricks, sun-burnt and kiln-burnt, or of stone, according to the means of the builder. These houses were large, but not lofty, and had terraces upon the roofs. The Tlascalans

* Note the predominance of the pyramidal shape.

† It was afterwards ascertained that in the whole province of Tlascala there were 500,000 heads of families. — "Hay en esta Provincia por visitacion, que yo en ella mandé hacer, quinientos mil Vecinos."—Lorenzana, p. 60.

had not arrived at that advanced stage in the art of building, which is indicated by the existence of doors; but they used matting instead, which was adorned with bells made of metal or sea-shells,* that gave due notice of entrance and exit.

The government was committed to four chiefs, who depended on the senate, and each of whom ruled a quarter of the city, which appears to have been strictly governed.

Cortes endeavours to convert the Tlascalans.

Almost the only transaction of Cortes at Tlascala of which we have a clear account, serves to illustrate his untiring zeal for religion. The Tlascalan chiefs thought they could not welcome these resplendent strangers better, or secure their friendship more certainly, than by presenting their daughters to them as wives. Upon this occasion, Cortes, whose religious zeal had already been restrained by Father de Olmedo, took the opportunity of explaining the Christian Faith to the Tlascalans, and endeavoured to make it a condition that if these Indian ladies were received as wives, the Tlascalans should quit their idolatry, and worship the true God. The chiefs remonstrated against such a proceeding, and intimated

* "Las Casas de Terrado, ó de Açotea de Vigas, í tablaçon, hechas de Adoves, Ladrillo, í de Cal, í Canto, como cada uno bodia: no usaban altos, sino paxos, í Salas mui grandes, de estraña hechura: tampoco Puertas, ni Ventanas, sino Esteras, hechas de Carriço, postiças, que se quitaban, í ponian, í colgados en ellas Cascaveles de Cobre, í de Oro, ó de otros Metales, í de Conchas Marinas, para que hiciesen ruido, quando se quitaban, ó abrian, í cerraban."—Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 2, lib. 6, cap. 12.

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that their people would die sooner than cease to sacrifice to their gods. Upon this, Father de Olmedo again interfered. He said that it would not be right to make them Christians by force. That what had been done in Cempoala, in throwing down the idols there, was against his judgment, and that such things were useless until the Indians should have some knowledge of the true Faith. "What was the good," he remarked, "of taking away the idols from one temple, when they would set up similar ones immediately in another?"* He relied upon a conversion which required more time and milder means. Such was the substance of what Father de Olmedo said, anticipating, perhaps, that Cortes would not hesitate to take extreme measures in carrying out a point which he had so much at heart. The advice of the good Father, much in advance of the temper of his time, and indeed of our time too, seems to have prevailed in this instance; and the work of conversion to Christianity was left to the truly Christian methods of reasoning and persuasion. A conversation is given by a modern historian, which a certain Tlascalan lord, named Magisca, the one who in the senate had advocated peace with the Spaniards, held with Cortes on the subject of religion. He perceived, he said, that the Spaniards had something like a sacrifice, but yet there was no victim; and the Tlascalans "could not imagine how there was to be a sacrifice unless some one should die for the safety of

The missionary zeal of Cortes restrained by Father de Olmedo.

A discourse between Cortes and Magisca on religion.

* See Bernal Diaz, cap. 76.

the rest."* Then, again, though willing to admit that the God of the Spaniards was a very great God, greater than his own gods, he yet maintained that each god had power in his own country, and that many gods were necessary, one against tempests, another for harvests, a third for war.† In short, the Tlascalans were firm in their idolatry. They were willing, however, to give way in a temporal matter which Cortes had very early proposed to them,—namely, to become vassals of the King of Spain. But we may safely conclude, that they understood but little of what they undertook to do when they gave this promise of vassalage.

The Tlascalans become vassals of the King of Spain.

After staying twenty days in Tlascala, Cortes, accompanied by some thousands‡ of his Tlascalan allies, proceeded on his way to Mexico. He had been much solicited by Montezuma's ambassadors to come to Cholula and await their master's response in that town. The Tlascalans, on the

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* "Ni sabian que pudiese haber Sacrificio sin que muriese alguno por la salud de los demás." —De Solis *Conquista de la Nueva-España*, lib. 3, cap. 3. I do not know what authority De Solis had for this conversation; but the remarks of Magisca have some air of verisimilitude.

† The Tlascalans were much astonished to find that the Spaniards worshipped (so they interpreted it) a cross. "Il établit dans la grande salle du palais de Xicotencatl un oratoire avec une croix et une image de Notre-Dame, où l'on dit la messe presque tous les jours; il fit placer avec une grande solennité une autre croix dans la salle où il recevait le sénat. Les Tlaxcaltèques étaient très étonnés de voir que les Espagnols adoraient le Dieu qu'ils appelaient Tonacaquahuitl ou l'arbre de la nourriture."—Ixtlilxochitl, *Histoire des Chichimèques*, chap. 84. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

‡ There is a discrepancy in the accounts which Cortes and Bernal Diaz give of the numbers.

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other hand, had warned him of some treacherous intent on the part of the Cholulans and of the Mexican ambassadors.

Cortes proceeds to holula.

Cortes, however, marched on Cholula, but met with a cold and uncertain reception there. It was a grand town. Bernal Diaz thus describes it. "It had, at that time, above a hundred very lofty towers, which were adoratories, where stood their idols; and I remember," he adds, "that, when we entered that city, and beheld such lofty towers glistening in the sun, it seemed like Valladolid." Cortes gives a still more favourable account of Cholula. "It is a more beautiful city from without than any in Spain, for it is many-towered and lies in a plain. And I certify to Your Highness that I counted from a mosque there four hundred other mosques, and as many towers, and all of them towers of mosques. It is the city most nt for Spaniards to live in of any that

His description of Cholula.

I have seen here, for it has some untilled ground (meads) and water, so that cattle might be bred, a thing which no other of the cities that we have seen possesses; for such is the multitude of people who dwell in these parts that there is not a hand-breadth of ground which is not cultivated."* Here Cortes found other messengers from Montezuma, but these did not come apparently with any message to Cortes, but to prepare an ambuscade by which twenty thousand Mexican troops were to fall upon the Spaniards in the streets of Cholula. This scheme was betrayed to Donna Marina by a Cholulan woman; the Tlascalans had also suspected it, and Bernal Diaz says that he remarked that the Cholulans withdrew from them with a mysterious kind of sneer on their faces. Cortes seized on two or three of the Cholulans, who confessed the plot, laying the blame on Montezuma. Calling his men together, Cortes informed them of the danger, and of his intention to punish the Cholulans. To the townspeople he pretended that he was about to set off the next morning, for which purpose he required food, attendants for the baggage, and two thousand men of war. These they agreed to furnish him. On the next morning he mounted his horse, summoned the Cholulan caciques round him, informed them that he had discovered their treachery, and then commenced an attack upon them. He had placed

Mexican ambuscade.

Treachery of the Cholulans.

* "Es tanta la multitud de la Gente, que en estas Partes mora, que ni un palmo de Tierra hay, queno esté labrada."—Lorenzana, p. 67.

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a guard in the outer court of the building where he was lodged, to prevent escape. A musket was fired as a signal; and then the Spanish soldiers set upon the unfortunate Cholulans in a way, which, as Bernal Diaz says, they would for ever remember, "for we slew many of them, and others were burnt alive; so little did the promises of their false gods avail them."*

Massacre of the Cholulans.

Cortes had the Cholulans now completely at his mercy: he appointed a new Cacique, the former one having been slain in the conflict; addressed the priests and chiefs on the subject of religion; destroyed the cages full of men and boys fattening for sacrifice; and, but for Father de Olmedo's persuasion, he would have pulled down and broken to pieces the idols, but he contented himself with erecting an altar and a cross.

Meanwhile, the Mexican ambuscade returned to Mexico, bringing the unwelcome news to their Monarch of the failure of the enterprize: and Cortes, quitting Cholula, marched on with much circumspection, "the beard always on the shoulder,"† towards the capital.

Cortes marches on to Mexico.

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* Las Casas, in a work, the only one of his which has been much seen and circulated in the world, gives a most unfair account of the massacre of Cholula, entirely omitting the treachery of the Cholulans, which, or rather the belief in which, was the sole cause of the massacre; whereas, he makes the motive of Cortes to have been a wish to spread terror. "Acordaron los Españoles de hazer alli una matança, ó castigo (como ellos dizen) para poner, y sembrar su temor, ó braveza en todos los rincones de aquellas tierras." —*Brevissima Relacion de la destruycion de las Indias*, p. 17. Sevilla, año. 1552.

† "Andavamos la barba sobre el ombro."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 86.

It was when they had advanced about eight leagues from Cholula, in the gorge between two lofty mountains, that Cortes and his little army, looking northwards, first saw before them the great valley of Mexico, with the lakes, the central city, and the smaller tributary towns in the neighbourhood. Historians have made much of this first view of Mexico, forgetting how little thought a busied captain and a band of fortune-seeking adventurers have to bestow upon what is picturesque and beautiful. Besides, it is, perhaps, the parting, and not the approaching glance, which discovers the full beauty of any scene in nature; or, at least, makes men inclined to linger upon it. But Cortes was hurrying on to conquest, with a mind occupied by fanaticism, ambition, and that which is dearer than all to men who aspire to command, namely, a wish to be right in what they have once determined upon. He, therefore, tells with a coolness, which forms a ludicrous contrast to the glowing descriptions of historians, of his first beholding the territory of Montezuma.*

First view of the great valley of Mexico.

The common soldiers are represented to have been divided in their opinions upon what they beheld. The more resolute amongst them, looking down upon the wondrous cities of that mighty plain, thought of the booty it contained,

Thoughts of the common soldiers on first seeing Mexico.

* "Otro dia siguiente subí al Puerto por entre las dos Sierras, que hé dicho, y á la bajada de él, ya que la tierra de el dicho Muteczuma descubríamos por una Provincia de ella, que se dice Chalco."—*Carta de Relacion de* D. Fernando Cortes. Lorenzana, *Hist. de Nueva-España*, p. 72.

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and recollected a well-known proverb, "The more Moors, the more spoil."* Those who were inclined to prudence, considering the populousness of which they beheld so many signs, thought it was a temptation of Providence for such a handful of men to enter so mighty a kingdom.

Montezuma's messengers fail to stay Cortes.

At the place where Cortes rested after his descent, he found messengers from Montezuma, who sought to dissuade him, by the pretended difficulties of the way, from entering further into the great King's territories. They also offered bribes.† The resolute Cortes replied with courtesy; alleged his duty to the King of Spain to proceed; and passed on.

Montezuma's necromancers.

There is a tale, which comes from Mexican sources, that Montezuma bethought him now of staying the advance of the Spaniards by means of his wizards and his necromancers. He sent a number of them forth, that by their incantations and their wizardries they might enchant his enemies to their destruction. It may readily be conjectured that these wise men were too careful of their lives to adventure within the Spanish camp, but the story they told was, that they met a man in the way, "he seemed like an Indian of Chalco; he seemed like one that is drunk;" and that this man threatened and scorned them. "What does Montezuma intend to do?" he exclaimed. "Is it now he is bethinking himself of awakening; is it now he is beginning to

* "Mas Moros, mas ganancia."

† "Concertarian de me dar en cado año, *certum quid*."—Lorenzana, p. 73.

fear? But already there is no remedy for him; for he has caused many deaths unjustly. He has committed many injuries, treacheries, and follies." Then the soothsayers and enchanters were much afraid, and made a mound of earth as an altar for this man. But he would not sit upon it, and his wrath was only greater, and he spoke again, saying, "He would never more make account of Mexico, nor have charge of that people, nor assist them. And when the soothsayers would have answered him, they could not do so (*lit.*, there was a knot in their throats)."*

Having uttered these things, and other threats pointing to the destruction of Mexico, the seeming Chalcan vanished from their sight. Then the soothsayers perceived that they had been talking with the god Tezcatlipuk; and they returned to the presence of Montezuma, and related what had happened to them. And when he heard it, the King was very sad and crest-fallen (*cabizbajo*), and for a time said not a word. At last, he broke out into lamentations over Mexico, deploring the fate of their old men and their old women, of their youths and of their maidens, ending a doleful discourse by words which contain the philosophy of despair:—"We are born: let that come which should come."† And thus these soothsayers and necromancers, who had no doubt been an oppressive institution upon the Mexican kingdom, were of no

The necromancers bring back bad tidings.

* "Hizoseles un nudo en la garganta."

† "Nacidos somos: venga lo que viniere."

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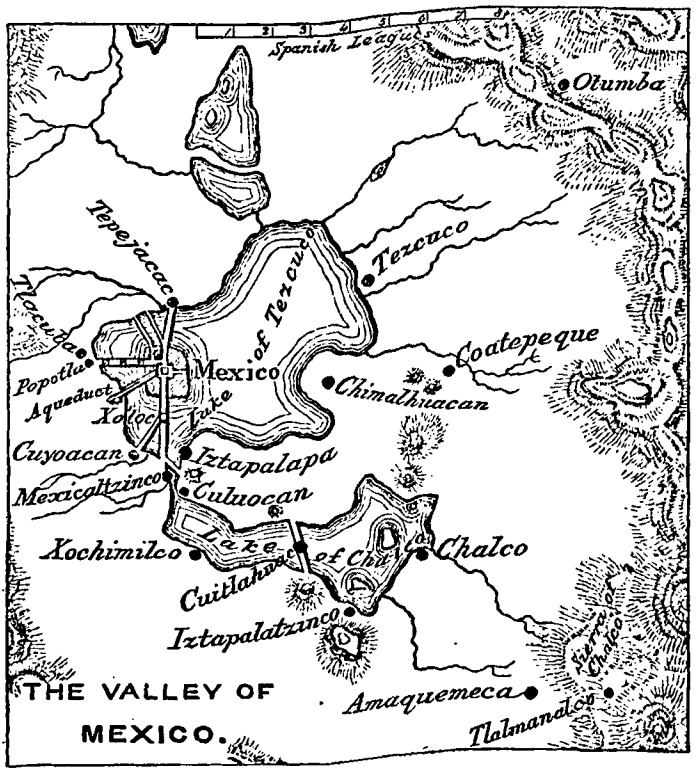
avail in time of danger, unless to utter unpleasant and reproachful things, which utterances are nearly sure to be made in the days of adversity, without the aid of soothsaying or necromancy.*

The march of Cortes.

The next place that Cortes reached was Amaquemeca; and staying there for the night,



he was well received, and found officers of Montezuma, who had been sent to see that the Spanish army was adequately provided for.

* This story is to be found, more fully narrated, in the *Historia Universal de las cosas de Nueva-España* of Bernardino de Sahagun, lib. 12, cap. 13, Kingsborough's *Collection.*

Cortes at Iztapalatzinco.

At Iztapalatzinco, on the border of the Lake of Chalco, where Cortes rested on the following day, an embassage, headed by the King of Tezcuco, Montezuma's nephew, made a last effort to detain the adventurous Spaniard. But neither the excuses which they made, nor the threats which they held out, sufficed to delay the march of Cortes for a single hour.

As these ambassadors returned to Mexico, Cortes followed in their rear, passing through an exquisite little town, "with well-built houses and towers" rising out of the water, named Cuitlahuac, situated in the centre of a causeway that divided the Lake of Chalco. After being sumptuously regaled at Cuitlahuac, Cortes set off for Iztapalapa, a little town belonging to Cuitlahuatzin, a brother of Montezuma.* It was in this day's journey, and when they had reached the broad causeway that forms the beginning of the highway from that town to Mexico, that the full beauty of the city and its magnificent environs burst upon their sight. I have said before, that a troop of men hastening to make their fortunes, are not easily allured by natural scenery. But here was a scene at which the most disciplined soldier would not wait for the word of command to halt, but would stop short of his own accord, as if he had suddenly come into some realm of enchantment. Bernal Diaz

At Cuitlahuac.

The first near sight of Mexico.

* Iztapalapa is derived from *Yxtatl*, the Mexican word for salt. "Yxtapalapa, que quiere decir Pueblos donde se coge Sal, ó Yxtatl; y aun hoy tienen este mismo oficio los de Yxtapalapa."—Lorenzana, p. 56—note.

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exclaims, "And when we saw from thence so many cities and towns rising up from the water, and other populous places situated on the terra-firma, and that causeway, straight as a level, which went into Mexico, we remained astonished, and said to one another that it appeared like the enchanted castles which they tell of in the book of Amadis, by reason of the great towers, temples, and edifices which there were in the water, and all of them work of masonry. Some, even, of our soldiers asked, if this that they saw was not a thing in a dream."* The beauty of the sight seems to have had an exhilarating effect, for there is not a word said of the danger which these enchanted towers and palaces might portend. Their General, however, had been very wary throughout his route from Cholula, and an historian remarks of his conduct during this journey, that his vigilance was always beyond his thoughts,† by which is meant that his caution in action exceeded even his apprehensiveness in thought.

Cortes at Iztapalapa.

At Iztapalapa Cortes rested for a night, previously to entering Mexico. In recounting any other journey, the traveller, or even the historian, would pause to relate the beauties and the delights of Iztapalapa. The common soldier, Bernal Diaz, says that he was never tired of beholding the diversity of trees, the

* Bernal Diaz, cap. 87.

† "Mas cómo yban sobre aviso, y el general era tan aperçebido que siempre se hallaba adelante de sus pensamientos." — Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 33, cap. 5.

raised terraces, the flower-gardens traversed by large canoes, and adorned with beautiful frescoes.*

The next day Cortes entered Mexico.

Cortes enters Mexico. Nov. 8, 1519.

Who shall describe Mexico—the Mexico of that age? It ought to be one who had seen all the wonders of the world; and he should have for an audience those who had dwelt in Venice and Constantinople, who had looked down upon Granada from the Alhambra, and who had studied all that remains to be seen of the hundred-gated Thebes, of Babylon, and of Nineveh.

The especial attributes of the most beautiful cities in the world were here conjoined; and that which was the sole boast of many a world-renowned name formed but one of the charms of this enchantress among cities. Well might the rude Spanish soldier find no parallel but in the imaginations of his favourite Romance.† Like Granada, encircled, but not frowned upon, by mountains; fondled and adorned by water, like Venice; as grand in its buildings as Babylon of old; and rich with gardens, like Damascus;—the great city of Mexico was at that time the fairest in the world, and has never since been equalled. Like some rare woman, of choicest parentage, the

Description of Mexico.

* "No me hartava de mirallo, y ver la diversidad de árboles, y los olores que cada uno tenia, y andenes llenos de rosas y flores, y muchos frutales, y rosales de la tierra, y un estanque de agua dulce: y otra cosa de ver, que podrian entrar en el vergel grandes canoas desde la laguna, por una abertura que tenia hecha sin saltar en tierra, y todo mui encalado, y luzido de muchas maneras de piedras y pinturas en ellas."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 87.

† *Amadis de Gaul.*

descendant of two royal houses far apart, who joins the soft, subtle, graceful beauty of the South, to the fair, blue-eyed, blushing beauty of the North, and sits enthroned in the hearts of all beholders,—so sat Mexico upon the waters, with a diadem of gleaming towers, a fair expanse of flowery meadows on her breast, a circle of mountains as her zone: and, not unwomanlike, rejoicing in the reflection of her beautiful self from the innumerable mirrors which were framed by her streets, her courts, her palaces, and her temples.

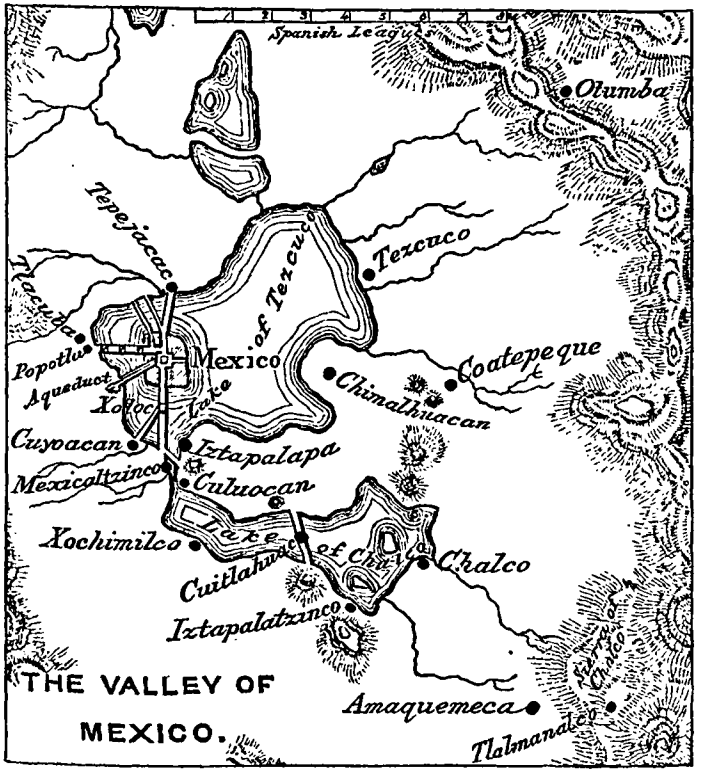
Mexico very beautiful, even when seen closely.

Neither was hers a beauty, like that of many cities, which gratifies the eye at a distance; but which diminishes at each advancing step of the beholder, until it absolutely degenerates into squalidity. She was beautiful when seen from afar; she still maintained her beauty, when narrowly examined by the impartial and scrupulous traveller. She was the city not only of a great king, but of an industrious and thriving people.

If we descend into details, we shall see that the above description is not fanciful nor exaggerated. Mexico was situated in a great salt lake, communicating with a fresh-water lake. It was approached by three principal causeways of great breadth, constructed of solid masonry, which, to use the picturesque language of the Spaniards, were two lances in breadth. The length of one of these causeways was two leagues, and that of another a league and a half; and these two ample causeways united in the middle of the city, where stood the great temple. At the ends of these causeways were wooden draw-bridges, so that

communication could be cut off between the causeways and the town, which would thus become a citadel. There was also an aqueduct which communicated with the main land, consisting of two separate lines of work in masonry,

The aqueduct.



in order that if one should need repair, the supply of water for the city might not be interrupted.

The streets were the most various in construction that have ever been seen in any city in the world. Some were of dry land, others wholly of water; and others, again, had pathways of pavement, while in the centre there was room for

Construction of the streets.

boats.* The foot-passengers could talk with those in the boats.† It may be noticed that a city so constructed requires a circumspect and polite population.

Palaces are common-place things to describe; but the abodes of the Mexican kings were not like the petty palaces of Northern princes. One of the most observant of those Spaniards, who first saw these wonders, speaks of a palace of Montezuma's in which there was a room where three thousand persons could be well accommodated, and on the terrace-like roof of which a splendid tournament might have been given.‡

Montezuma's palace.

There was a market-place twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded with porticoes, in which there was room for fifty thousand people to buy and sell.

The market-place.

The great temple of the city maintained its due proportion of magnificence. In the plan of the city of Mexico, which is to be found in a very early edition of the Letters of Cortes,

The great temple.

* "Les autres étaient à moitié garnies d'une terre argileuse, battue, qui faisait l'effet d'un pavé en brique; l'autre moitié était remplie d'eau; les habitants peuvent circuler sur la terre ou bien sur l'eau dans leurs barques." —*Relation sur la Nouvelle-Espagne*, chap. 17. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*. (*Relatione d'alcune cose della Nuova Spagna e della gran città di Temistitan Messicò*. Fatta per un gentil'huomo del Signor Fernando Cortese. Ramusio, tom. 3.)

† The boats that plied in and about Mexico were estimated at fifty thousand in number.

‡ "On voyait dans une de ces résidences un salon assez vaste pour que trois mille personnes pussent y tenir sans être gênées. Ce palais était si vaste, que sur la terrasse qui le couvrait on aurait pu donner un tournois où trente cavaliers se seraient exercés aussi facilement que sur la grande place d'une ville."—*Relation sur la Nouvelle-Espagne*, chap. 20. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

published at Nuremberg,* and which is supposed to be the one that Cortes sent to Charles the Fifth, I observe that the space allotted to the temple is twenty times as great as that allotted to the market-place. Indeed, the sacred enclosure was in itself a town; and Cortes, who seldom stops, in his terrible narrative, to indulge in praise or in needless description, says that no human tongue could explain the grandeur and the peculiarities of this temple.† Cortes uses the word "temple," but it might rather be called a sacred city, as it contained many temples, and the abodes of all the priests and virgins who ministered at them, also a university, and an arsenal. It was enclosed by lofty stone walls, and was entered by four portals, surmounted by fortresses. No less than twenty‡ truncated pyramids, probably cased with porphyry, rose up from within that enclosure. High over them all towered the great temple dedicated to the god of war. This, like the rest, was a truncated pyramid, with ledges round it, and with two small towers upon the highest surface, in which were placed the images of the great god of war (Huitzilopochtli) and of the

The enclosure of the great temple.

A sacred city.

* See Stevens's *American Bibliographer*, under the head of "Cortes." A facsimile of the plan is inserted in that valuable work, from which the one given in this book is taken. It has also been compared with the original in the British Museum.

† "Entre estas Mezquitas hay una, que es la principal, que no hay lengua humana, que sepa explicar la grandeza, y particularidades de ella: porque es tan grande, que dentro del circuito de ella, que es todo cercado de Muro muy alto, se podia muy bien facer una Villa de quinientos Vecinos." —Lorenzana, p. 105.

‡ Cortes says forty; but I prefer abiding by the words of "the Anonymous Conqueror."

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principal deity of all (Tezcatlipuk), the Mexican Jupiter. It is sad to own that an entrance into these fair-seeming buildings would have gone far to dissipate the admiration which a traveller—if we may imagine one preceding Cortes—would, up to this moment, have felt for Mexico. The temples and palaces, the polished, glistening towers, the aviaries, the terraces, the gardens on the house-tops (many-coloured, for they were not like those at Damascus, where only the rose and the jasmine are to be seen); in a word, the bright, lively and lovely city would have been forgotten in the vast disgust that would have filled the mind of the beholder, when he saw the foul, blood-besmeared idols, with the palpitating hearts of that day's victims lying before them, and the black-clothed, filthy, unkempt priests ministering to these hideous compositions of paste* and human blood. "Let the stern Cortes enter," is the cry which the amazed spectator would have uttered, when he saw these horrors, and thought of the armed men who were coming to destroy them. And yet this conjunction, which was to be met with at Mexico, of beauty and horror, is no new thing, and something very like it may be discovered in other guise throughout the world! Civilization side by side with the uttermost horrors! Such is the contrast to be found in the

The temple foul within.

* "Elles étaient composées de la réunion de toutes les plantes dont ils se nourrissent, ils les enduisaient de sang de cœur humain ('Le impastavano con sangue di cuori d'huomini.'—Ramusio); voilà de quelle matière leurs dieux étaient faits."—*Relation sur la Nouvelle-Espagne*, ch. 12. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

present age too; and such, perhaps, in each of ourselves. And so, with some feeling of pity, even for a nation of cruel and bloodthirsty idolaters, we may contemplate the arrival of the Avenger as he makes his entry into Mexico.

Lest the reader should think that the historian is too studiously apologetic for the Mexican barbarities, let him imagine, for a moment, that Christianity had arisen in the New instead of the Old World; that some Peruvian Columbus had led the way, from West to East, across the Atlantic; and that American missionaries had come to Rome, in the first century of the Christian era. Honoured by the Emperor as ambassadors from some "barbarian" power, and taken in his suite to the Coliseum, with what intense disgust and consternation would these pious men have regarded all that they saw there. They would have seen men torn in pieces by wild beasts, not for anything so respectable as superstition, but simply to indulge a vile morbid love of amusement, to gratify the meanest vanity, and to attain the basest popularity. "These spectators are indeed savages," they would have exclaimed: "and behold, there are women, too, amongst them! No longer beautiful, in our eyes, are the golden palaces, the marble colonnades, and the countless images, admirably sculptured, which we find amongst these barbarous Roman people. Let us hasten to convert them."

Worse savages in the Coliseum at Rome than in the great temple of Mexico.

But the Old World has always been proud of its Rome, and spoken of its Romans as the masters of civilization.

CHAPTER IV.

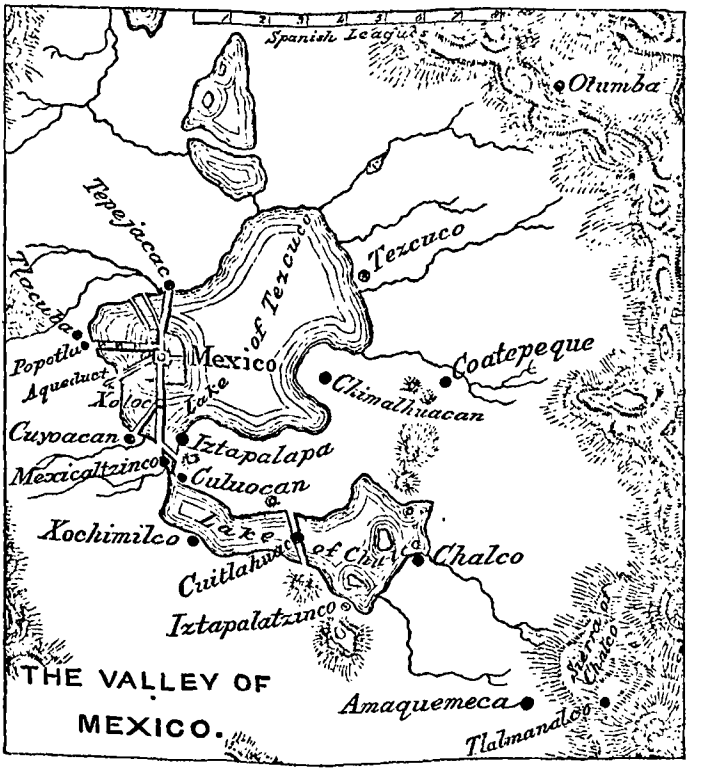
INTERVIEWS BETWEEN CORTES AND MONTEZUMA — CORTES VISITS THE GREAT TEMPLE—THE MEXICAN IDOLATRY.

Reception of Cortes by Montezuma.

THE route by which Cortes entered Mexico was along the great causeway which led from Iztapalapa. As he approached the city, he was met by a thousand Mexican nobles richly clad, who, after the fashion of their country, saluted him by laying their hands in the dust, and then kissing them. This ceremony, as it was performed by each one separately, occupied more than an hour. Cortes then passed over the drawbridge which led into the city, and was received there by Montezuma. He had been borne from the city in a rich litter, but when he approached the bridge, he descended to receive Cortes, being supported on the arms of his brother and his nephew, the Kings of Tezcuco and Iztapalapa. A gorgeous pall, of which the ground-work was either green feathers, or made to represent green feathers, was exquisitely adorned with pendant embroidery of gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones. This pall, or canopy, was held over him by four great lords. He wore a mantle rich with gold and precious stones; on

Montezuma's dress.

his head a mitred diadem of gold, and on his feet golden sandals,* richly embossed, "after the manner of the ancients." The subordinate Kings were bare-footed, though dressed in other respects as magnificently as Montezuma. The Spanish General descended from his horse and



would have embraced the Mexican Monarch. But this gesture did not accord with the notions

* "Traìa unos Çapatos de Oro, i Piedras engastadas, que solamente eran las Suelas prendidas con Correas, como se pintan à lo antiguo." — Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 65. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

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of reverence entertained by the Mexicans for their kings; and Cortes was prevented from executing this friendly but familiar intention of his. They interchanged presents, however, Cortes throwing upon Montezuma's neck a collar made (somewhat significantly) of false pearls and diamonds; while Montezuma, as they went further on, gave the Spanish General two collars made of shells which the Mexicans valued much, each collar being adorned with eight golden pendants in the form of craw-fish, admirably wrought. The procession then moved on with all due pomp into the town, for the stately Spaniard was the man of the Old World who understood pomp nearly as well as any of these despots of the New World. The eyes of the beholders, familiar with the aspect of gold and jewels, were doubtless fixed upon the wondrous animals that came foaming and caracolling along. Behind them all rode Death, but no one saw him.

Cortes and Montezuma exchange presents.

Mexico, being such a city as I have described, was pre-eminently adapted for the display of a great concourse of human beings. By land and by water, on the towers, on the temples, at all heights of those truncated pyramids, were clustered human beings to gaze upon the strangers. The crowds that came to see the Spaniards made the spectacle very grand, but did not add to their sense of security. Indeed, as they marched along this narrow causeway, intersected by various bridges, of which they well knew the use that

might be made in war, they must have felt, as one of them owns he did feel, considerable apprehension. The wary counsel that had been given to them by the Tlascalans and the other enemies of Montezuma, was sure on this occasion to be present to the minds of some of them; but, no doubt, they all marched on with soldierly composure to the quarters which Montezuma had prepared for them. These were in the palace of his father, a previous sovereign of Mexico. Having conducted the Spaniards thither, he left them to refresh themselves, after the fatigues of their journey.

Apprehensions of the Spaniards.

The memorable day on which Cortes and his companions entered Mexico was the 8th of November, 1519. Their number was about four hundred and fifty men. In a time of extraordinary festivity, they would have formed but a poor and mean sacrifice to have been offered to the Mexican gods. On the other hand, the very least number at which the population of Mexico can be estimated is three hundred thousand, and I conceive it to have been much larger.*

Population of Mexico.

* "Torquemada affirms, that the population of the capital amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand houses; but the Anonymous Conqueror, Gomara, Herrera, and other historians, agree in the number of sixty thousand houses, not that of sixty thousand inhabitants, as Robertson says; for no ancient author computed them so few in number. It is true that in the Italian translation of the relation of the Anonymous Conqueror we read *sessante mila abitanti;* but this has been, without doubt, a mistake of the translator, who having, perhaps, found in the original *sesenta mil vecinos,* translated it sixty thousand *abitanti,* when he ought to have said *fuochi;* because, otherwise, Cholula, Xochimilco, Iztapalapa, and other such cities, would be made greater than Mexico. But in the above

The course of history amongst people, who have the same general ideas, the same religion, and who are not far removed from each other in civilization, is apt to be somewhat monotonous, and sadly to perplex the memories of children and other unfortunate persons, who have to give an account of what they read. But when the men of one hemisphere meet the men of another, after having been separated for unknown centuries, the simplest affair between them is in the highest degree curious; and the difficulties of the narrative, the strangeness of the names (which, however, might not be so inharmonious if we knew how to pronounce them), and whatever else may be repulsive in the story, are all overcome by the originality of the transactions. In this case, Cortes, who may very fitly represent the European commander of that age, both in his valour, his policy, and his devoutness, meets the greatest monarch of the state most advanced in civilization of the Western world; and, if we could but trust to interpreters, what an insight we should have into the history of this strange and eventful conquest.

Renewal of intercourse between the men of the New and of the Old World.

But alas! those who know how difficult a

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mentioned number the suburbs are not included. It appears that TORQUEMADA included the suburbs, but still his calculation appears excessive."—CLAVIGERO, *History of Mexico*, English translation, book 9, p. 72—note.

This error of reckoning the heads of families as the whole population requires to be much guarded against in early American history. Even M. HUMBOLDT is said to have fallen into it. See *Antigüedades Peruanas*, p. 65. It is certain that *vecinos* does not in this instance mean individual neighbours, but the heads of neighbouring families. We often use the word "neighbour" in the same sense.

thing it is to render one European language into another, may well feel bewildered, when they have to give an account of what passed through the mouths of interpreters in languages where frequently there were no cognate ideas. Moreover, supposing the respective translations freed from mere difficulties of language, they still were likely to be varied largely by the passions and the interests of the bystanders, and then to be coloured according to the personages for whom the reports of these conversations were prepared. It is necessary to bear all these difficulties in mind when considering the transactions which are now to be narrated, and the evidence upon which they rest.

Much left to conjecture in interpreted discourse.

After the Spaniards had dined in the palace set apart for them, Montezuma returned, and had a formal conference with Cortes. The account which the Spanish Commander gives to his Sovereign of this conference is, that Montezuma commenced by saying, that he and his subjects were descended from strangers who had come from afar into this country.* He added that their leader had returned to his own country, and that when he came again to seek his people, they declined to accompany him back, and that finally he returned alone. The Mexican nation, however, had always supposed that the descendants of this great leader would come again, and subdue the

Conference between Cortes and Montezuma.

* Observe, from Peter Martyr's account of the speech, how a statement of this kind grows. "Ad oras magnus quidam princeps post omnium viventium memoriam, *classe vectus*, majores nostros perduxit."—Dec. 5, cap. 3.

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earth; that it was probable that the great personage of whom Cortes had spoken* (Charles the Fifth) was a descendant of the first leader of the Mexicans to that country, and, consequently, their natural Lord; that he, therefore, and his people held Cortes for Lord in the place of his master, and placed all that they had at his disposal.

Improbability of part of the speech as reported.

So far the report of the speech of Montezuma seems likely to be false, or, at least, greatly overstrained. Montezuma may have sought to claim kindred with these wondrous and valorous strangers. He may have alluded to prophecies about their coming—and the concurrence of testimony on this point is very remarkable. But that he placed himself and his kingdom in this unreserved manner, in open court, as it were, at the feet of Cortes in their first interview, is in the highest degree unlikely; and we cannot but regret to find the authority for this conversation, not only in the history subsequently drawn up by the Chaplain of Cortes, but in the letter of Cortes himself to the Emperor. What follows is probable and credible. Montezuma went on to say that he well knew that Cortes had heard from the Tlascalans and others many calumnies about him, and many exaggerations, such as that the walls of his palaces were made of gold, and that he was a god; "whereas you see," he said, "my palaces are made of stone, lime, and earth, and my flesh is like yours." He then assured them that they

* Not on the present occasion, but before, to Montezuma's ambassadors.

should be provided with all necessary things, and be under no care, just as if they were still in their own country and their own homes.

Cortes visits Montezuma.

The next day Cortes paid a visit to Montezuma. This time the conversation was not political but religious; and Cortes, insincere, crafty, and reserved, in mundane matters, seems to have compensated for all this, and to have indulged in a sincerity which bordered on rashness, in all that concerned spiritual matters. It may be doubted whether, in the annals of conquest, any conqueror can be found (except perhaps some Mohamedan one) who was more deeply imbued with the missionary spirit than was Cortes.

The Spanish Commander, already not unpractised in expounding the mysteries of the Christian Faith, repeated briefly the story of Christianity; explained to Montezuma why the Spaniards worshipped the cross; condemned and scorned the Mexican idols; and informed Montezuma how these idols had given way before the cross.*

Cortes as a preacher.

From the New Testament Cortes passed to the Old Testament, spoke of the Creation, of Adam and Eve, of the universal brotherhood of man, and then said that his King, in the spirit of such brotherhood, grieving over the loss of souls, had sent the Spaniards to prevent the adoration of idols and the sacrifice of men and women. He then held out a hope that certain persons,

* "Que mirassen quan malos son, y de poca valia, que adonde tenemos puestas Cruzes, como las que vieron sus Embaxadores, con temor dellas no osan parecer delante."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 90.

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who were of a much more saintly character than he and his men, would hereafter be sent by the King of Spain to instruct the Mexicans in these sacred things.

Montezuma now indicating a wish to speak, Cortes concluded his discourse, doubtless putting a restraint upon himself for so eloquent a preacher.

It brings the whole scene more vividly before us, and shows, I think, that at least we are right in concluding Religion to have been the chief, if not the only, subject discussed at this interview, that Cortes turned to his men and said, "We will finish with this, as it is the first touch."*

Montezuma's reply to Cortes.

"My Lord Malinché!"† replied Montezuma, "I have had a perfect understanding of all the discourse and reasonings which you have addressed before now to my vassals upon the subject of your God; and also upon that of the cross; and also respecting all the other matters that you have preached about in the *pueblos* through which you have passed. We have not responded to any of these things, for from the beginning here we have adored our gods and have held them to be good gods; and so, no doubt, are yours: do not take the trouble, at present, to say anything more about them to us. And, with respect to what you say about the Creation of the World, we, too, are of opinion that it was created a long time

* "É díxonos Cortés á todos nosotros, que con el fuimos; con esto cumplimos, por ser el primer toque." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 90.

† Malinche, from *Malintzin*, the Lord of Marina; *tzin* being a Mexican title, added to names, and corresponding to the word "Lord."

ago; and we hold it for certain that you are the persons of whom our ancestors spoke to us, who would come from where the Sun rises; and to that great King of yours I am much obliged; and I will give him of that which I may have."*

The above is part of a speech recorded by Bernal Diaz, and may be taken as an unbiassed account of what that honest soldier, who was present, gathered of the meaning of what passed in this memorable interview. It will be observed how inconsistent it is with the report given by Cortes of what took place on a former occasion. The grand and polite Montezuma might well say that he would give of what he had to this unknown but related foreign potentate; but this is a very different thing from promising vassalage and subjection; and, being yet unconquered, talking like a defeated man and a prisoner.

Montezuma asks about De Córdova and Grijalva.

Montezuma then asked some very natural questions, such as whether Hernandez de Córdova and Grijalva were of the same nation as Cortes, and being answered in the affirmative, went on to say, how happy he was to see the Spaniards at his court. If he had sought to prevent them from coming there, he added, it was not from any

* "No os hemos respondido á cosa ninguna dellas; porque desde abinicio acá adoramos nuestros Dioses, y los tenemos por buenos: é assí deuen ser los vuestros; é no cureis mas al presente de nos hablar dellos; y en esso de la creacion del mundo, assí lo tenemos nosotros creido muchos tiempos passados: é á esta causa tenemos por cierto, que sois los que nuestros antecessores nos dixeron que vernian de adonde sale el Sol é á esse vuestro gran Rey yo le soy en cargo, y le daré de lo que tuviere."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 90.

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wish of his to exclude them, but because his subjects were so frightened at them, saying that they threw thunder and lightning about, that they were savage deities, and follies of that sort. For his part, now that he had seen the Spaniards, his opinion of them was raised. He held them in more esteem than before, and would give them of whatever he possessed.

Rational and dignified discourse of Montezuma.

Cortes and all the Spaniards present responded with fitting courtesies; and then Montezuma smilingly, for he was a humorous man, though a dignified one,* made the same remarks about the calumnies and exaggerations of the Tlascalans which have been quoted before.

Cortes, in his turn smiling, replied with some commonplace remark about men always speaking ill of those whom they were opposed to; and then the interview was gracefully ended by gifts of gold and garments, which were brought in and distributed amongst all the Spaniards who were there present.

I think it must be admitted that in this interview† the great King of the West comported himself with much discretion and dignity, putting aside politely, and yet respectfully, any discussion upon theological matters, as if he had been a worldly statesman of our own time, always anxious to get rid of these subjects, as knowing how little

* "Porque en todo era mui regozijado, en su hablar de gran Señor."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 90.

† It is curious that Cortes does not say anything of this conference in his letter to Charles the Fifth; the reason for such an omission may be because he had received no such commission as he claimed, and therefore did not like to make such a statement to the Emperor.

they tend to the outward peace and physical happiness of mankind.

A well-known writer, and one thoroughly skilled in Mexican affairs, the celebrated Jesuit Acosta, remarks, in reference to the proceedings of this day, or of some other early day after the arrival of Cortes in Mexico, that many persons were of opinion that the Spaniards might have made anything they pleased of Montezuma and his people, and have introduced the gospel without bloodshed. "But," as he adds, "the judgments of God are high, and the faults on both sides were many, and so the thing turned out very differently."*

The gospel might have been introduced peaceably.

This opinion may be well-founded; but, on the other hand, it must be remarked that the Mexicans were not in a similar state to those Indians amongst whom the most remarkable conversions have been made by peaceful means. An established priesthood, with large revenues, pompous buildings, and a carefully regulated ritual, formed an element in the Mexican Empire which would render it much less convertible to Christianity than were the comparatively primitive people of Copan and Paraguay, or the wandering tribes in Florida. Amongst these latter is to be found the most remarkable instance of conversion, or rather of opportunity for conversion,

Mexicans not easy to convert.

* "Es opinion de muchos, que como aquel dia quedó negocio puesto, pudieran con facilidad hazer del Rey y reyno lo que quisieran, y darles la Ley de Christo con gran satisfacion y paz. Mas los juizios de Dios son altos, y los pecados de ambas partes muchos, y assí se rodeó la cosa muy diferente."—Acosta, *Hist. Nat. y Moral de las Indias*, lib. 7, cap. 25.

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that, I think, ever was recorded. It is to be met with in the narrative of Cabeça de Vaca. He and his companions, shipwrecked, naked, and for a long time treated as slaves, acquired, probably through their medical knowledge, or greater discernment in things in general, an influence, as of gods, over the natives of Florida. The remarkable point of the narrative is, that they were not held in this high consideration by one tribe only, but by all they came amongst; and that they were borne in triumph from one tribe to another, all men's goods in the tribe at whose grounds they arrived being brought out before them, and, to the great vexation of the Christians, divided amongst their followers, who consisted of the preceding tribe.* The whole of this narrative seems to throw some light upon the extraordinary stories which pervade the Indian traditions in America of men of higher cultivation than themselves who come and give them laws and manners, and then vanish away, promising to return again.

Treatment of Cabeça de Vaca and his companions in Florida.

Such transactions, however, were only possible amongst a primitive people, and were not to be

* "Í los robadores para consolarles los decian, que eramos Hijos del Sol, í que teniamos poder para sanar los enfermos, í para matarlos, í otras mentiras, aun maiores que estas, como ellos las saben mejor hacer quando sienten que les conviene: í dixéronles, que nos llevasen con mucho acatamiento, í tuviesen cuidado de no enojarnos en ninguna cosa, í que nos diesen todo quanto tenian, í procurasen de llevarnos donde havia mucha Gente, í que donde llegasemos robasen ellos, í saqueasen lo que los otros tenian, porque así era costumbre." — *Naufragios de* Alvar Nuñez Cabeça de Vaca, *en la Florida*, cap. 28, tom. 1. Barcia, *Historiadores.*

expected to take place amongst the Mexicans, though much, doubtless, might have been done to introduce Christianity gradually amongst them.

These speculations are a very fit introduction to the next public proceeding of Cortes, which was to ask for leave to see the great temple, dedicated to the Mexican god of war. This request Montezuma granted with apparent pleasure. But, for fear lest the Spaniards should do any dishonour to his gods, as they had done in the provinces, he resolved to go himself to the temple; and accordingly he repaired thither with his accustomed pomp. On their way, the Spaniards visited the great market-place, which perhaps was the best means of learning, in a short time, the skill and riches of the people by whom they were surrounded.

Cortes asks for leave to see the temple.

Visits the market on his way.

In this vast area each kind of merchandize had its own quarter, and it would be difficult to specify any kind which was not to be seen there. To begin with the noblest and the most shameful merchandize, namely, that of human beings, there were as many to be found as "the negroes whom the Portuguese bring from Guinea."* Then, every kind of eatable, every form of dress, medicines, perfumes, unguents, furniture, fruit, wrought gold and silver, lead, tin, brass, and copper, adorned the porticoes and allured the

Commodities sold there.

* "Esclavos y esclavas; digo, que traian tantos á vender á aquella gran plaça, como traen los Portugueses los negros de Guinea, e traian los atados en unas varas largas, con collares á los pescueços, porque no se les huyessen, y otros dexavan sueltos."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 92.

passer-by. Paper, that great material of civilization, was to be obtained in this wonderful emporium; also every kind of earthenware, salt, wood, tobacco, razors made of obsidian,* dressed and undressed skins, cotton of all colours in skeins, painters' colours, building materials, and manure; wine, honey, wax, charcoal, and little dogs. Convenience was well considered; porters were to be hired,† and refreshments to be obtained. One curious thing, which Cortes noticed, was, that every commodity was sold by number or by measure, and not by weight.

Wise regulations of the market.

With regard to the regulations under which this vast bazaar was held, it may be noticed that the Mexicans had arrived at that point of civilization, where fraud is frequent in the sale of goods; but, superior even to ourselves in this day, they had a counterpoise to this in a body of officers called judges,‡ who sat in a court-house on the spot, and before whom all causes and

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* "Obsidian, jade, and Lydian-stone, are three minerals, which nations ignorant of the use of copper or iron, have in all ages employed for making keen-edged weapons. * * * * This variety of lava" (obsidian) "was employed as an object of ornament: and the inhabitants of Quito made beautiful looking-glasses with an obsidian divided into parallel laminæ."—Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*, vol. 1, chap. 2.

† "Hay Hombres como los que llaman en Castilla Ganapanes, para traher cargas."—Lorenzana, p. 103.

‡ "Hay en esta gran Plaza una muy buena Casa como de Audiencia, donde estan siempre sentados diez, ó doze Personas, que son Jueces, y libran todos los casos, y cosas, que en el dicho Mercado acaecen, y mandan castigar los Delinqüentes. Hay en la dicha Plaza otras Personas, que andan continuo entre la gente, mirando lo que se vende, y las medidas con que miden lo que venden; y se ha visto quebrar alguna que estaba falsa."—Lorenzana, p. 104.

matters relating to the market were tried, and who commanded the delinquents to be punished. There were also officers who went continually about the market-place, watching what was sold, and the measures which were used. When they found a false one, they broke it. This market was so much frequented, that the busy hum of all the buying and selling might be heard for a league off. Amongst the Spaniards there were soldiers who had served in Italy and in the East; and they said, that a market-place so skilfully laid out, so large, so well managed, and so full of people, they had never seen. In considering the list of commodities which were to be sold there, and which may serve to make life tolerable, I note only three deficiencies—bills of exchange, newspapers, and books; but any one of these things indicates a civilization of a higher order than the Mexican, and was reserved for some of the steadiest and subtlest thinkers* of the great races of the world.

Things deficient in the market of Mexico.

From the market-place the Spaniards moved on towards the temple, or to what, as before noticed, might have been justly called the sacred city, for even ere they reached the great enclosure, they came upon courts and enclosures, which, doubtless, were the precincts of the temple, and must have been in some way connected with its ministrations. At last they reached the polished surface of the great court, where not even a straw

* The Italians have, I believe, the best claim to the merit of having invented bills of exchange.

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or any particle of dirt was suffered to remain. Amidst all the temples which adorned this court one stood pre-eminent, where Montezuma himself was worshipping. On seeing Cortes, the King sent six priests and two of his principal nobles to conduct the Spanish Commander up to the summit of the temple. When they came to the steps, which were a hundred and fourteen in number, the attendant Mexicans wished to take Cortes by the arms, and to assist him in ascending; but he dispensed with their aid, and, accompanied by his men, mounted to the highest platform, where they saw a horrible figure like a serpent, with other hideous figures, and much blood newly spilt. Oh! what a change from the wisdom of the market-place to the sublime folly and foulness of the temple!

Cortes and his men ascend the temple.

At this moment Montezuma came forth from the chamber, or chapel, if we may call it so, where he had been worshipping. Receiving Cortes and his company with much courtesy, he said, "You must be tired, my Lord Malinché, after your ascent to this our great temple." But Cortes replied that "he and his men were never tired by anything."*

Then the King took Cortes by the hand, and bade him look down upon the great city, and upon the surrounding cities on the border of the lake—those beautiful glistening satellites of the primary and pre-eminent Mexico. Cortes, however, does

* "Que él, ni nosotros no nos cansavamos en cosa ninguna."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 92.

not tell us anything of the beauties and wonders which were to be seen in this view from the summit of the temple. It is the inherent curse of politic and foreseeing men, that they enjoy, and even recognize, the present so much less than other men do. The common soldiers looked down and gazed in all directions, noticing the temples, the oratories, the little towers, the floating gardens,* and those light and graceful draw-bridges, which were especially to be seen in the surrounding towns. It was then that a murmuring talk arose amongst them about Rome and Constantinople, and all that each man had seen of what was deemed, till this moment, most beautiful in the world. But, as Cortes looked down, what other thoughts were his! A poet

View from the summit of the great temple.

* "They plait and twist willows, and roots of marsh plants, or other materials, together, which are light, but capable of supporting the earth of the garden firmly united. Upon this foundation they lay the light bushes that float on the lake, and over all, the mud and dirt which they draw up from the bottom of the same lake. Their regular figure is quadrangular; their length and breadth various; but as far as we can judge, they are about eight perches long, and not more than three in breadth, and have less than a foot in elevation above the surface of the water. These were the first fields which the Mexicans owned after the foundation of Mexico; there they first cultivated the maize, great pepper, and other plants, necessary for their support. In progress of time, as those fields grew numerous (*eccessivamente moltiplicati*, orig.) from the industry of those people, there were among them gardens of flowers and odoriferous plants, which were employed in the worship of their gods, and served for the recreation of the nobles. * * * In the largest gardens there is commonly a little tree, and even a little hut to shelter the cultivator, and defend him from rain, or the sun. * * * That part of the lake where those floating gardens are, is a place of infinite recreation, where the senses receive the highest possible gratification."—Clavigero, *History of Mexico*, book 7, p. 375. See also Torquemada, lib. 15, cap. 32.

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speaks of "the cloudy foreheads of the great." The child and the rustic, in simple envy of those above them, who seem to them all-powerful, little dream of the commanding cares and hungry anxieties which beset the man who has undertaken to play any considerable part in the world. And, if ever there was a man who had undertaken a great part, without rehearsal, it was Cortes. The multitude of people moving to and fro, which enlivened the beautiful prospect in the eyes of the common soldier, afforded matter of most serious concern to the man who had to give orders for the next step in this untrodden wilderness of action. Even the hum of the market-place was no pleasant murmur in his ears, for he could readily translate it into the fierce cries of thousands of indignant warriors.

The anxious thoughts of a leader of men.

The thoughts of Cortes as he looked down from the temple.

It is often happy for us that we do not know the thoughts of those who stand by us, or perhaps on this occasion, the lofty politeness of the sovereign and the warrior might have changed into an instant death-struggle as to which of them should be hurled down first from that platform, and complete the sacrifice of that eventful day.

Cortes, in whom Policy then only slumbered when Religion spoke to him, said to Father de Olmedo, "It appears to me, that we might just make a trial of Montezuma, if he would let us set up our church here?"* The wiser priest replied,

* "Paréceme Señor Padre, que será bien que demos un tiento á Monteçuma; sobre que nos dexe hazer aquí nuestra Iglesia."—Bernal Diaz; cap. 92.

that it would be very well to make that request if there were any likelihood of its being successful, but that the present did not appear to him the time for making it, nor did he see in Montezuma the humour to grant it. Upon this Cortes abandoned the idea, and merely asked the King to allow the Spaniards to see his gods. To this Montezuma, after having consulted his priests, consented; and the Spaniards entered those dread abodes of idolatry.

There is a family likeness in all idols; and, when the Spaniards had advanced within the little tower where the hall of the "god of war" was, they found two hideous creatures seated on an altar and under a canopy, large and bulky figures, the one representing Huitzilopochtli and the other Tezcatlipuk. The god of war had a broad face, wide mouth, and terrible eyes. He was covered with gold, pearls, and precious stones; and was girt about with golden serpents. In one hand he held a bow, in the other arrows. A little idol, his page, stood by him, holding a lance and a golden shield. On Huitzilopochtli's neck, a fitting ornament, were the faces of men wrought in silver, and their hearts in gold. Close by were braziers with incense, and on the braziers three real hearts of men who had that day been sacrificed.

The Mexican idols: the god of war.

All around, the walls were black with clotted blood.*

* Mere literary men and antiquarians have blamed the efforts of those who sought to efface the memory even of these accursed idolatries from the minds of the Indians. We cannot

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Tezcatlipuk.

On the left hand of the god of war was Tezcatlipuk, with a countenance like that of a bear, and with mirrors for eyes. A string of little demons encircled his waist. Five human hearts, of men that day sacrificed, were burning before this idol.

Centeotl.

A third false deity, the "deity of increase," made half woman,* half crocodile, gilded and jewelled like the rest, was to be seen, not in the same room with Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk, but, as it were, enniched above, in a recess that was formed in the highest part of the tower.

In this recess, too, the walls and the altar on which the idol stood were covered with blood. The smell of the great hall had been like that of some slaughter-house; but in the recess, the crowning horror of this accursed place, the detestable odour was so overpowering, that the only thought of the Spaniards who had ascended into this part of the building was how most quickly to get out of it.† Here was a great drum made of serpents' skins, which, when struck, gave forth a melancholy hideous sound; and here were instruments of sacrifice, and many hearts of men.

Cortes must testify against these idolatries.

It might be prudent, or it might not be prudent, but Cortes must give some utterance to his feelings; and we may well wonder at the

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wonder, however, at any sacrifice of books, pictures, or even buildings, for that great end.

* Bernal Diaz says "half man," but I think the deity must have been Centeotl, the Mexican Ceres, the goddess of *centli* (maize).

† "Era tanto el hedor, que no viamos la hora de salirnos á fuera." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 92.

reserve with which he spoke, rather than at his being able to refrain no longer. With a smile he said, "I do not know, my Lord Montezuma, how so great a King and so learned a man as you are, can have avoided to perceive (literally, should not have collected in your thoughts) that these idols of yours are not gods, but evil things which are called 'devils;' and that you and all your priests may be satisfied of this, do me the favour not to take it ill that we should put in the lofty recess of this tower a cross, and then in the hall where your deities Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk are we will make a compartment where we may put an image of Our Lady (this Montezuma had already seen), and you will behold the fear which those idols that keep you in delusion have of it."

Montezuma defends his false gods.

But Montezuma and his priests were troubled and grieved at these words, and the King said, "My Lord Malinché, if you believe that it is your business to say such dishonourable things as you have said of my gods, I will not show them to you. We hold them for very good gods, and they give us health and rain, harvests and fine weather, victories and whatever we desire: it is our business to adore them, and to sacrifice unto them. I must request of you that no more words be uttered to their dishonour." To this speech, and to the alteration of aspect in the King, which Cortes noticed with the swift appreciation of a courtier, the Spaniard with an apparently gay countenance replied, "It is time that Your Highness and we should go."

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To this Montezuma answered that it was well, but that for his part he must stay behind, to pray and make sacrifice for the sin he had committed in permitting the Spaniards to ascend the great temple, and for his having been the cause of injurious words having been uttered against his gods. Upon this, Cortes, with all due courtesy, took leave; and the Spaniards, descending with difficulty the deep steps of the temple, marched back to their quarters, sickened, saddened, and somewhat enlightened as to the nature of the men by whom they were surrounded.

Cortes returns from the temple.

Coming into the light of day, hearing the busy tumult of the market-place and the merry noise of children playing in the sun; then catching bright glimpses of the water, and looking at the unnumbered boats which plied along the streets; all that they had seen in the dark and dismal charnel-houses of Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk must have seemed to the Spaniards an ill-omened dream. Years would pass away, and they would become veterans, covered with wounds and with renown, before they would have time to think over and to realize to themselves the full horror of the accursed things which they had looked upon that day.

Living in a Christian country and with every means of enlightenment, we feel it difficult to comprehend how so much civilization, or what looks very like it, could be found in company with barbarous human sacrifices; but this apparent anomaly is soon explained, when we

come to look into some of the prime causes of movement in the human soul. In justice to the Mexicans, we should consider what can be said for them. An historian should know no hate; and we of this age must not share the blind sentiments of horror which occupied the minds of the conquering Spaniards, and served to justify their proceedings.

Some attempt to explain the horrors of the Mexican religion.

When we reflect upon the untoward, disastrous, and ridiculous aspect of human life—how, for instance, little things done or neglected at an immature period have so fatal an influence throughout a life-time,—when we behold the successful iniquity, the immense injustice, and the singular infelicity, which often beset the most innocent of men—nay, further, when we see the spitefulness of nature—for so it seems unless profoundly understood,—when we consider the great questions of human life, such as free will and the origin of evil, which are not explained now, but only agreed to be postponed in humble hopefulness, and which, in the earlier periods of the world's history, exercised to the full their malign discouragement,—we cannot wonder at the belief in evil deities of great power and supremacy. And, then, what more natural than to clothe such deities with the worst attributes of bad men, and to suppose that they must be approached with servility, and appeased by suffering. Then, further, what more natural than to offer to such gods of the best upon earth, namely, our fellow men.

It must not be forgotten that there was often

a friendly feeling towards the persons sacrificed, and in some cases they were looked upon as messengers to the gods, and charged with distinct messages.

The idea of human sacrifice, as pleasing to the gods, being once adopted in moments of victory, doubt, or humiliation, is soon developed. The evil practice becomes a system, and partakes of the strength of all systems, taking root amongst the interests, the passions, and the pleasures of mankind; and, thenceforward, he will be a bold man, and, rarer still, a thinker, not given to stop anywhere in thought, who shall lift himself above the moral atmosphere of his nation, and shall say, "This thing which all consent in, and which I have known from my youth upward, is wrong."

Having thus stated something on behalf of the Mexicans, which does not, however, make the indignation of the Spanish soldiers less reasonable or natural, I take up the thread of the history, and return to the little garrison of Cortes in the midst of this splendid city of cruel and polite idolaters.

I must call the attention of the reader to the fact, that a work which, for convenience, is constantly referred to in these pages as LORENZANA, is a collection of the letters of Cortes, made by FRANCISCO ANTONIO LORENZANA, Archbishop of Mexico, and published, with maps and annotations of some value, in 1770. For an account of these letters, which, from their length, may more fitly be called despatches, see STEVENS's *American Bibliographer*. The first despatch is lost: the second contains the occurrences from 16th of July, 1519, to 30th of October, 1520: the third contains the occurrences from 30th of October, 1520, to 15th of May, 1522. The second and third despatches are those principally referred to in this part of the history.

CHAPTER V.

DIFFICULT POSITION OF CORTES—CAPTURE OF MONTEZUMA.

THE question as to what Cortes was to do next, was a most difficult one. If we put ourselves, in imagination, into his place, and lay down several plans of action, we shall find great difficulties inherent in any of them. Was he to play the part of an ambassador, and, after observing the nature of the country, and endeavouring to form some league of amity with the monarch, to return to Cuba or to Spain? He would but have returned to a prison or a grave; for the ambassadorial capacity which he assumed was a mere pretext.

What course left for Cortes?

Was he to make a settlement in the country? For that purpose he must get safe out of Mexico, return through territories whose gods he had insulted, and whose people he had slaughtered, and taking up a position at his city of Vera Cruz, remain exposed to the revengeful attacks by sea of his employer, the Governor of Cuba.

Was he to be a missionary or a trader? By what unfit men was he surrounded for such enterprizes as these!

His only career was conquest; and, unfortunately, in the rapidity of that conquest lay his

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chief hope of safety. Now, what is so swift as terror? What could he do in that way, what hostage could he secure, which should paralyze at once the arms of the vigorous multitudes who surrounded him, waiting but a despot's nod to make the endeavour at least to overwhelm these unwelcome strangers?

There was no such hostage but the person of the King himself! True that this Monarch had received Cortes graciously and grandly, and it would be an act of vast perfidiousness thus to requite his hospitality. But policy does not take the virtues, or the affections, into council. This act of treachery seemed the safest thing to be done, and, therefore, with Cortes, it was the best. I have shown that the destruction of the fleet was not so great a transaction as it has often been represented, and that other people shared in it; but this projected seizure of Montezuma's person belonged to Cortes alone, and whatever greatness there was in it, call it great prudence or call it great iniquity, was his. I am reminded of a maxim, full of wisdom, uttered by a man versed in conspiracy,* who said that there are certain positions in affairs, in which it is impossible to make a step which shall not be a wrong one; but that men do not come into those positions without some considerable fault of their own. The fault in the position of Cortes was an incurable one, namely, the uncertainty of support from the mother-country, but it was a fault occa-

Fatal position of Cortes.

* Cardinal de Retz.

sioned by his original misconduct to his employer, Velazquez. In the greatness of the conquest we are apt to forget the poor position of the conqueror, and to speak of him as if he had been a powerful prince, or an authorized general, with all the strength and the responsibility of such a station; whereas he was merely a brilliant adventurer, having lost the authority with which he was originally clothed. It was the misfortune that beset nearly all the Spanish conquests in America, that they were made by men of insufficient power and authority for such transactions. Another Alexander was required to conquer another India. Had there been a powerful European prince for such an undertaking, consolidation might have gone hand in hand with conquest; and millions, absolutely millions, of lives might have been saved. But that want of time which is the saddest and most common deficiency for all men in power, the disturbed state of Europe at this period, and the inability to recognize what is most requisite to be done, which belongs to each successive generation, prevented the conquest of America from taking anything like its highest form, and threw it into the hands of men who lacked the authority to maintain themselves in the position which they had assumed.

Also of other Spanish conquerors.

The reader, who probably knows the outline of the story of Cortes, may be surprised at his career being considered otherwise than most successful. On the contrary, however, I venture to think that a conquest is most dearly purchased

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which is accompanied by large destruction of the conquered people.

The resolve of Cortes,

Having made an apology for the resolve of Cortes, which he would probably have thought very needless, we may proceed to consider its execution. The deed, once resolved upon, was sure to be swiftly accomplished. That miserable interval between resolve and execution, which is the torment and the ruin of weak men, was a thing not known in the career of Cortes. He had not been one week in Mexico, before he resolved to seize the person of Montezuma, had chosen his pretext for doing it, and had arranged his plans.

His pretext.

The plea that he made use of was a skirmish (into the details of which we need not enter) between Juan de Escalante, who had been left in command at Villa Rica, and the people of a neighbouring town called by the Spaniards Almeria, in which skirmish Escalante and six Spaniards had fallen. That this affair was only important as it furnished a pretext, may be seen from the account which Cortes gives of the transaction to Charles the Fifth, in which he states that from some things which he had seen since his entry into Mexico, and also from what he had observed on his journey, it appeared to him, "that it was convenient for the royal service, and for the security of the Spaniards under his command, that Montezuma should be in his power, and should not have complete liberty." Cortes adds, that he feared lest there should have been an unfavourable change in the Mexican Monarch's conduct towards the Spaniards, "especially as we Spaniards are somewhat

difficult to live with and troublesome, and if Montezuma should have taken offence, he was powerful enough to do us much harm; so much so, indeed, that we might be utterly destroyed" (literally, *that there might be no memory left of us*).* Moreover, Cortes thought that, Montezuma once in his power, all the provinces of the Mexican Empire would easily be brought under the Spanish dominion.

Cortes communicated to his soldiers his intention of seizing Montezuma; and they, according to Bernal Diaz, passed the night in prayer to the Lord, "that the enterprize might be so conducted as to redound to His holy service."† In the morning, careful preparations having been made, Cortes went to the palace, accompanied by five of his principal captains and his two interpreters, Geronimo de Aguilar and Donna Marina. So cautious a general took care to keep up the line of communication between his advanced position and the main body of his forces in the fortress, by stationing parties of his men at the points where four streets met.‡ When arrived

The mode of execution.

* "Que convenia al Real Servicio, y á nuestra seguridad, que aquel Señor estuviesse en mi poder, y no en toda su libertad, porque no mudasse el propósito, y voluntad, que mostraba en servir á Vuestra Alteza, mayormente, que los Españoles somos algo incomportables, é importunos, é porque enojándose nos podria hacer mucho daño, y tanto, que no oviesse memoria de nosotros, segun su gran poder."—Lorenzana, p. 89.

† "Rogando á Dios, que fuesse de tal modo, que redundasse para su santo servicio."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 95.

‡ "Dejando buen recaudo en las encrucijadas de las Calles."—Lorenzana, p. 84.

at the palace, Cortes, according to his own account, began by talking playfully to Montezuma, who gave him on that occasion some golden ornaments and one of his daughters. The Spanish General then turned the discourse to the affair of Almeria, and to the loss of the Spaniards under Escalante, in which a certain unfortunate Cacique was concerned, whose name, as corrupted by Spanish pronunciation, was Qualpopoca. Cortes, who, as Bernal Diaz says, "did not care a chestnut about the matter" (*no lo tenia en una castaña*), made it out to be a concern of the most serious nature. He was answerable, he declared, to his King for the Spaniards who had been killed; and Qualpopoca had said that it was by Montezuma's orders he had committed this assault. The Monarch immediately took from his wrist a sort of seal, bearing the effigy of the Mexican god of war, and giving it in charge to some of his attendants, ordered that they should go to the scene of this skirmish between the Spaniards and his people, that they should inquire into the matter, and bring Qualpopoca bound before him.

Cortes insists upon Montezuma coming to the Spanish quarters.

This was a very prompt procedure, and Cortes thanked the Monarch for it, but said that, until the matter was cleared up, Montezuma must come and live with the Spaniards in their quarters, which, it is almost needless to add, they had taken care to make a strong post of. The Spanish General begged Montezuma not to be annoyed at this request, saying that he was not to be a prisoner, but was to conduct his government as before, and that he should occupy what apartments he pleased,

and, indeed, that he would have the Spaniards in addition to his own attendants, to serve him in whatsoever he should command. Book X. Ch. 5.

But it may be conjectured that all these soothing words were not even heard by the Mexican Monarch, who sat stupified by the vast audacity of the demand. Here was a man, into whose eyes other men had not ventured to look, who was accustomed, when rarely he moved from his palace, to see the crowd prostrate themselves before him as he went along, as if he were indeed a god, who never set foot upon the ground;* and now, in his own palace, undefeated, not bound, with nothing to prepare him by degrees for such a fearful descent of dignity, he was asked by a few strangers, whom he had sought to gain by hospitality, and to whom he had just given rich presents, to become their prisoner in the very quarters which he had himself graciously appointed for their entertainment. It is a large assertion to make of anything, that it is the superlative of its kind, but it must, I think, be admitted, that the demand of Cortes was the most audacious that was ever made, and showed an impudence (there is no other fitting word) Montezuma's amazement. The unparalleled request of Cortes.

* "Jamas puso sus piés en el suelo, sino siempre llevado en ombros de Señores."—Acosta, *Hist. Nat. y Mor. de Indias*, lib. 7, cap. 22. This assertion, that Montezuma never set foot on the ground, must be confined to his appearances in public; for, when he went in disguise, like an Eastern Caliph, to ascertain whether his judges took bribes, he must have gone about like any other man. "Tambien se disfraçava muchas vezes, y aun echava quien ofreciesse cohechos á sus Juezes, ó los provocase a cosa mal hecha, y en cayendo en algo desto, era luego sentencia de muerte con ellos." —Acosta, ibid.

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which borders upon the heroic. At this day, though we have all known the story from childhood, it seems as if it were a new thing; and we still wonder what Montezuma will say in reply to Cortes.

Montezuma refuses.

The Monarch's answer, when he could speak at all, was the following. "I am not one of those persons who are put in prison. Even if I were to consent, my subjects would never permit it."*

Cortes persists.

Cortes urged his reasons why Montezuma should adopt the course proposed by the Spaniards, but, as these reasons were based upon falsehood, it is no wonder, that even in the opinion of one of his followers, he should have appeared to have the worse of the argument.† This controversy lasted some time, and Cortes himself speaks of the prolixity of the discourse, and betrays all the insolence of a conqueror, when he declares that it is needless to give account of all that passed, as not being substantial to the case.‡

Meanwhile the peril of the Spaniards was increasing, and the patience of these fierce men

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* "Je ne suis pas de ceux que l'on met en prison; même si j'y consentais mes sujets ne le souffriraient jamais."—Fernando D'Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *Hist. des Chichimèques*, chap. 85;—Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*. This account, given by the historian of Mexican origin, is confirmed in some respects by Bernal Diaz, who says, "Que no era persona la suya para que tal le mandasser."—Cap. 95.

† "Cortés le replicó mui buenas razones; y el Monteçuma le respondia mui mejores."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 95.

‡ "Acerca de esto pasamos muchas pláticas, y razones, que serían largas para las escribir, y aun para dár cuenta de ellas á Vuestra Alteza, algo prolijas, y tambien no sustanciales para el caso."—Lorenzana, p. 86.

was fast passing away, when one of them, a man with a harsh voice, exclaimed, "What is the use of all these words? Let him yield himself our prisoner, or we will this instant stab him. Wherefore, tell him that if he cries out, or makes disturbance, we must kill him, for it is more important in this conjuncture that we should secure our own lives than lose them." Montezuma turned to Donna Marina for the meaning of this fierce utterance; and we cannot but be glad that it was a woman who had to interpret these rough words to the falling Monarch, and even to play the part of counsellor as well as interpreter. She begged him to go with the Spaniards without any resistance; for, she said, she knew that they would honour him much, like a great Lord as he was; and that on the other side lay the danger of immediate death.

Marina counsels the Monarch.

The unfortunate Montezuma now made a last effort to obviate the dire indignity. He said, "My Lord Malinché, may this please you:—I have one son and two daughters, legitimate. Take them as hostages, and do not put this affront upon me. What will my nobles say, if they see me borne away as a prisoner?" But Cortes was not the man to swerve in the least from his purpose, and he said that Montezuma must come with them, and that no other thing would do.

The Monarch was obliged to yield. It is said, and is not improbable, that he was urged to declare that he acted thus in obedience to a response given by Huitzilopochtli, the Mexican god of war, though this was hardly the fitting

Montezuma yields.

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deity to choose as the imputed instrument of such ignoble counsel.

Orders were instantly given to prepare apartments for Montezuma in the Spaniards' quarters. The Mexican nobles, whose duty it was to bear his litter, came at his bidding, and prepared themselves, barefooted, with their accustomed humility, and with more than their accustomed affection, to place the litter on their shoulders. But, as all pomp and state, even in the mightiest monarchies, requires some time for arrangement and preparation, it appears that the equipage itself was but a poor one.* And so, in a sorry manner, borne on by his weeping nobles, and in deep silence, Montezuma quitted his palace, never to return, and moved towards the Spanish quarters. On his way he encountered throngs of his faithful subjects, who, though they could hardly be aware of what the transaction meant, would, at the slightest nod of the Monarch, have thrown themselves upon the swords of the Spaniards, in all the plenitude of devotion of a people who believed in their King as the greatest of men, and as the Vice-gerent of their gods on earth.

Montezuma quits his palace.

But no such signal came. Slowly and silently the litter passed onwards; and it must have been with strange misgivings that the people saw their Monarch encompassed by those whom they had long known to be their enemies, the Tlascalan allies of Cortes, and by a strange race of bearded,

* "Trahian unas Andas, no muy bien aderezadas, llorando, lo tomaron en ellas, con mucho silencio."—Lorenzana, p. 86.

armed men, who seemed, as it were, to have risen from the earth, to appal their nobles and to affront their religion.

This is an unparalleled transaction. There is nothing like it, I believe, in the annals of the world.

Montezuma's despotism the cause of his ruin.

The completeness of the despotism of Montezuma was a great part of his ruin. It was noticed by the Spaniards, as they entered Mexico, that his grandees did not dare to look him in the face. To use the expressive words of the chronicler, "they did not, in thought even, look up at him, but kept their eyes fixed on the wall."* It was very natural, therefore, for Cortes to think that striking a blow at the head would paralyze all the body politic in Mexico. He would hardly have thought of seizing any one of the Chiefs of Tlascala, where there was a Senate and men of nearly equal authority. In such a case the indignity is felt by all, and the power to avenge it is scarcely lessened by the forced removal of any one.

Qualpopoca burnt.

In a short time the officers who had been sent for by Montezuma's signet were brought to Mexico. They were, in all, seventeen persons. Being asked if they had made the attack on the Spaniards by Montezuma's orders, they said no: but, upon their sentence being carried into execution, which sentence was, that they should be burnt,† they all confessed that it was by Monte-

* "Todos estos señores ni por pensamiento le miravan á la cara."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 88.

† Very justly had Cortes displayed the blue and white flames upon his banner.

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zuma's orders they had acted. Cortes, thereupon, added to the inhumanity of this atrocious sentence upon these unfortunate men the cruel indignity to Montezuma of putting him in irons during their execution, which took place in front of the palace. Terror was evidently what the Spaniard throughout relied upon; and, in doing so, he appealed to an influence which had long been predominant in the mind of every Mexican. One who loved them well,* and who devoted his life to their conversion, owns that their character was servile.† They had been taught, he says, to do nothing for the love of good, but all things solely from the fear of punishment. To appease their gods they would sacrifice their own children. In truth, though taking many forms, terror was their god; and now a greater terror than they had hitherto known—a terror amenable to none of their priests—had come amongst them. Premature decay is ever inherent in a one-sided cultivation of the powers, the intellect, or the affections of mankind.

Terror a prevailing influence in the minds of the Mexicans.

* Peter of Ghent.

† "Ils sont bien disposés à accepter notre religion; mais ce qui est mal, c'est que leur caractère est servile; ils ne font rien s'ils n'y sont forcés; on ne peut rien obtenir d'eux par la douceur ou la persuasion. Cela ne vient pas de leur naturel, c'est le résultat de l'habitude. On les a accoutumés à ne rien faire pour l'amour du bien, mais seulement par crainte des châtiments. Tous leurs sacrifices, qui consistaient à tuer leurs propres enfants ou à les mutiler, étaient le résultat de la terreur et non pas de l'amour que leurs dieux leur inspiraient." —*Lettre du Frère* Pierre de Gand, *en date du 27 Juin*, 1529. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages.*

CHAPTER VI.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CAPTURE — MONTEZUMA BECOMES A VASSAL OF THE KING OF SPAIN — PAMPHILO DE NARVAEZ ARRIVES UPON THE COAST —CORTES QUITS MEXICO AND DEFEATS NARVAEZ.

THE pretext of Montezuma's capture being disposed of, we naturally turn to consider the consequences of the capture itself. We may imagine the rumours which ran through the city after Montezuma had been seen to accompany the Spaniards to their quarters — what a fervid noise rose up from the thronged market-place as the news was bruited there; how it was re-echoed in the gay streets, where the boatmen exchanged news with the passers-by on dry land; what fierce intonation was given to it in the sacred precincts of the temple, in the colleges, and the convents; and with what subdued and stealthy voices the matter was discussed in the palaces of grave and powerful nobles.

Very little restraint upon Montezuma.

The wary Cortes strove to make the imprisonment look as much like a visit as possible. The Mexican King received ambassadors, directed judges, held his court, and continued to fulfil the functions of royalty nearly after the same fashion that he had been accustomed to. He was not restricted in his amusements, not even in the

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chase; and the slightest indignity shown to him by any Spaniard was severely punished by Cortes.

Meanwhile, what were the thoughts, the plans, the hopes, and the fears of this captive Monarch? Historians, who are often supposed to know everything, and to be able to write with an insight into the minds of their principal personages, possessed only by the writers of fiction, will always be sorely puzzled to account for Montezuma's conduct. But, if one is obliged to give any explanation of it, that explanation must, I think, be based upon the ground that Montezuma really believed in the notion that the coming of Cortes and his men fulfilled the traditions of the Mexican race. A near acquaintance with the Spaniards gave Montezuma a greater insight into, and apprehension of, their power than was possessed by most of his subjects. Moreover, he doubtless perceived that his best chance of preserving his own life, was in preventing disturbance of any kind. It must be recollected also, that in dealing with Cortes he had to encounter one of the craftiest of men; and, finally, the circumstances were such as would have greatly perplexed any man who was not perfectly ready to peril his own life,—who did not, to use an emphatic expression, carry his life in his hand.

The probable thoughts of Montezuma in captivity.

It is not attempted here to write a complete history of Mexico, and only those salient transactions must be given which especially illustrate the course of the Conquest, and which can be relied upon. Now, the limits of Montezuma's freedom of action, the extent of the power which Cortes had

gained by bringing Montezuma to his quarters, and the general feeling of the Mexican people can hardly be indicated better than by the religious exercises of the Mexican Monarch. Had the captive been of the religion of his captors, or of any religion which did not require public demonstration, a chapel might have been put up in his prison, and, comparatively speaking, much less would have been indicated by the Monarch's absence from, or presence at, religious rites and ceremonies. But, whatever was left of kingship in Montezuma must be seen, or inferred, from his presence on the summit of that dread temple which overlooked the whole city. Accordingly, we find that Montezuma demanded permission from Cortes (what humbling of the mighty!) to go to his temple to make sacrifices and to fulfil his devotions, in order, as he probably told the Spaniards, that he might show himself to his people, and, afterwards, give his captains and principal men to understand that it was by the command of his god Huitzilopochtli that he continued to remain in the power of the Spaniards. Cortes wisely granted the request, warning Montezuma at the same time, that if there were any disturbance, it would be at the peril of his life. To ensure the constant presence of that peril, one hundred and fifty Spanish soldiers were to accompany the King. Cortes also made it a condition that there should be no human sacrifices. There were, he said, the altars of the Christian religion and the image of "Our Lady," before which the King might pray. Montezuma promised that he would

Montezuma is allowed to go to the temple.

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sacrifice no living soul, and set forth to the great temple in full state with his sceptre borne before him, his people and his nobles showing themselves as obedient and as respectful as heretofore. But the human sacrifices had already taken place, for, in the preceding night, four Indians* had been sacrificed. The assertion, therefore, of Cortes, that while he was in Mexico no human sacrifices were allowed,† must be taken with considerable limitations. The truth is, that neither Cortes nor the prudent Father Olmedo could at that time prevent these sacrifices taking place, for, as Bernal Diaz says, "they were obliged to dissimulate with Montezuma, as Mexico was much disposed to revolt, and other great cities, together with the nephews of Montezuma." The King did not stay long in the temple, and when he returned, he was in high good humour, and gave largesse to the soldiers who accompanied him. It was, no doubt, a great satisfaction to the poor Monarch, to have been able to show himself to his people in so much apparent freedom.

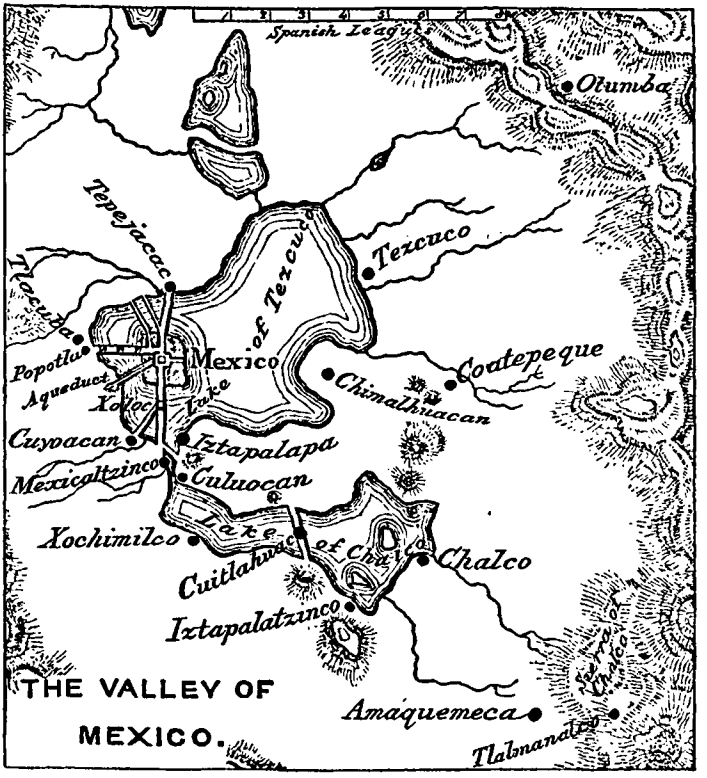
Cortes cannot entirely prevent human sacrifices.

We discern from what has just been stated about the inability of Cortes to put a stop to human sacrifice, that the Spanish General, though he had the person of the Mexican Monarch in his power, found still much to conquer in the disposition of the Mexican people, and in the near relations of Montezuma, some

* "Ya le tenian sacrificado desde la noche ántes quatro Indios."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 98.

† "En todo el tiempo, que yo estube en la dicha Ciudad, nunca se vió matar, ni sacrificar alguna Criatura."—Lorenzana, p. 107.

of whom were kings themselves. There can be no doubt that many of Montezuma's devoted adherents offered to make an effort to release their master, to all of whom he replied that it was the will of Huitzilopochtli that he should be kept in this durance, or, at least, he inti-



mated that it was his own will that they should make no move for the present. There was one member, however, of the Mexican royal family who was not to be controlled so easily. This was Cacamatzin, the nephew of Montezuma, and King of Tezcuco, a beautiful city on the borders

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of the Salt Lake, in which Mexico was situated. There is not time in this world for discussing minutely the family affairs of semi-barbarian princes with unpleasant names, who have perished long ago; and, therefore, I shall merely relate the fate of Cacamatzin, who was the chief personage in the conspiracy amongst the Mexican lords and princes which now threatened the domination of Cortes.

The Spanish General first sought to gain over Cacamatzin himself; but, failing in this, he then endeavoured to bring the influence of Montezuma to bear upon his nephew, in order to allure him within the power of the Spaniards. But the brave young Prince was filled with scorn at the patience of his uncle, and with indignation at the proceedings of the strangers. He had before counselled war, and that the Spaniards should have been met at the pass of the Sierra of Chalco; and he now declared that his uncle was no better than a hen. He said that the Spaniards were wizards, who by their magic had charmed away the great heart and courage of Montezuma. Their force, he maintained, resided not in them, but in their gods, and in the great woman of Castille (*la gran muger de Castilla*), for thus he designated the Virgin.

Indignation of Cacamatzin, the King of Tezcuco.

Such an enemy must, at all cost, be secured; and Montezuma, won over by Cortes, and probably informed of his nephew's contemptuous speeches, consented to a deed, the most deplorable of any which mark his captivity. It appears that he had in his pay some of the prin-

cipal persons at the court of Tezcuco.* By their means Cacamatzin's people were to be gained over, and his person secured. This scheme was successful. At a midnight meeting, when the Tezcucan King was concerting his plans for attacking Mexico, he was seized, hurried into a boat (the waters of the Lake ran underneath his palace), and was carried off to Mexico,† where Cortes put him in chains.

Capture of the King of Tezcuco.

It was now less difficult for Cortes to persuade Montezuma to give some public sign of fealty to the King of Spain. The unfortunate Monarch consented to summon his nobles and dependent princes for that purpose. No Spaniard was present at the first interview of the King with his nobles, save Orteguilla, a page in the suite of Cortes.

The account which we have of this conference, and for which the young page must be responsible, seems to be very like the truth. The Monarch began by reminding his counsellors of the history of their ancestors, and of the prophecy that from the East should come those who

Conference of Montezuma with his nobles.

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* The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, makes the brothers of Cacamatzin guilty of this treachery. "Cacamá, qui ne se défiait de rien, se livra à ses frères, qui, quand il fut dans le canot, s'emparèrent de sa personne, le conduisirent à Mexico, et le mirent entre les mains de Cortes." — *Histoire des Chimèques*, chap. 86; Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

† Él fablaria con ellos, para que atragessen alguna de la gente de el dicho Cacamazin á sí; y que trahida, y estando seguros, que aquellos favorecerian nuestro partido, y se podria prender seguramente."—Lorenzana, p. 95.

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were to have the lordship over the land of Mexico (*señoría estas tierras*). It is in the rendering of such expressions as the above that we may suspect a leaning towards that which should be the requisite Spanish sense of the words; but where so much is mere conjecture, I would not say that he did not use such an expression, which he is made to emphasize by the following words of his speech, in which he declared that at that time, namely, upon the advent of those people, the Mexican Empire was to cease.

A despot like Montezuma cannot, without a diminution of dignity, quote any less important personages than the gods of his country. He accordingly proceeded to declare that the Spaniards who had now arrived were the expected strangers. He added, that Huitzilopochtli, having been sacrificed to and consulted by the priests upon the present juncture of affairs, would not respond as usual. All that the god would give them to understand was, that what he had said to them at other times was that which he gave now for a response, and that they should not ask him more.* The politic idol! No Delphian oracle could have shown more craft; but the conclusion which Montezuma chose to draw was, that the Mexicans should offer obedience to the King of Castille, "for," he added, with the faith in coming events proving favourable, which belongs to those who lack the presence of mind to strike

The response of the Mexican god of war.

* "Que lo que les ha dicho otras vezes, aquello da aora por respuesta; ó que no le pregunten mas."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 101.

a bold stroke now, "nothing comes of that at present,* and, as time goes on, we shall see if we have another better reply from our gods, and, as we shall see the occasion, so we will act; for the present," continued the Monarch, "that which I command and beseech you, is to give some sign of vassalage, and soon I will tell you what it may better befit us to do." He then told them how he was importuned by Malinché to give this sign of vassalage. Finally, he appealed to their loyalty and their gratitude. Had he not enriched them, made broad their lands, and given to them governments? If he were detained in this durance, was it not that their gods permitted it, and (as he had often had occasion to tell them) that Huitzilopochtli had enjoined upon him to stay where he was?

Montezuma recommends to his lords an act of vassalage to the King of Spain.

The Mexican lords responded dutifully to their Sovereign's demands; but neither could they, nor could the Monarch himself, conceal the grief which insisted upon being felt at such humiliation. They wept; they sobbed: and for once the full flow of human passion was permitted at this precise court, in the presence of their dread Sovereign,—still dread to them, and never, perhaps, so dear. It represented the wailing of a whole nation, who had been accustomed to think themselves the greatest people upon earth, and who now saw their dignity trampled upon by a small body of unknown men.

Grief of the Mexican King and his nobles.

When the conference broke up, Montezuma

* "Al presente no va nada en ello."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 101.

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Montezuma publicly recommends an act of vassalage.

sent a messenger to Cortes, informing him, that the next day they would perform the act of vassalage to the King of Castille. Accordingly, on the following day, in the presence of Cortes and the Spaniards, Montezuma made an address to his lords similar to the speech which he had uttered the day before, except that the hopes he had hinted, and the consolations he had suggested, in their private interview, did not, for manifest reasons, find a place in this deplorable discourse, which was an undisguised recommendation of vassalage to the King of Spain.

Montezuma could bring himself to utter the words wrung from him by the importunity of Cortes, but he could not command his feelings sufficiently to do so with anything like regal unconcern. From the first to the last his speech was broken by sobs,* and by uncontrollable emotion. When he had ended, his lords could not reply to him for some time, so great was their anguish, and so loud their lamentations. The Spaniards themselves were almost as much moved as the Mexicans, and there was amongst them a soldier who wept as much as Montezuma himself.†

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* "Lo qual todo les dijo llorando, con las mayores lágrimas, y suspiros, que un hombre podia manifestar; é assímismo todos aquellos Señores, que le estaban oiendo, lloraban tanto, que en gran rato no le pudieron responder, Y certifico á Vuestra Sacra Magestad, que no habia tal de los Españoles, que oiesse el Razonamiento, que no hobiesse mucha compasion." — Lorenzana, p. 97.

† "Se nos enternecieron los ojos, y soldado huvo, que llorava tanto como Montezuma, tanto era el amor que le teniamos."— Bernal Diaz, cap. 101.

At last, the Mexican lords were sufficiently composed to declare themselves, "jointly and severally," vassals to the King of Spain. Never was a great empire more strangely and suddenly, and, we may say, ludicrously humiliated. Never did the animal creation play so great a part. Had Montezuma possessed twenty horses, his Empire would, I am convinced, have stood, at least for some time longer. This ceremony of professing vassalage was performed with all due legalities, a notary being present, and drawing up a solemn attestation of the proceedings.

Act of vassalage takes place.

As might be expected, one of the first things demanded of Montezuma after this act of vassalage, was gold, of which a great quantity—no less than to the value of one hundred thousand ducats—was handed over to Cortes by the King.

Cortes, who possessed a mind of the highest capacity for civil as well as military business, turned to the best account the power and influence which he had obtained over Montezuma. It will serve to illustrate the difference between a soldier who is more than half a statesman, and the vulgar, semi-animal conqueror, to see what were the objects Cortes instantly turned his attention to instead of the ordinary pillage and rapine which would have absorbed the whole attention of a mere man of conquest in a similar position. But Cortes reminds us of Cæsar; and war with him was but a means to an end.

The objects of Cortes.

He first took care to ascertain where the Mexican gold mines were to be found, and forthwith sent Spaniards, accompanied by Monte-

Mines.

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zuma's officers, into the several provinces designated as gold-producing.

Then he took measures to accomplish that which had, from the first, been a great object with him,* namely, to discover a good harbour in the Gulf of Mexico. On inquiring of Montezuma in reference to this point, the Monarch replied, that he did not know of any such harbour (and, indeed, the coast is very deficient in harbourage); but he provided Cortes with a picture of the whole coast, made for the occasion, in which the roadsteads and the rivers were all set down; and then Cortes sent out an exploring party of Spaniards. It is remarkable that, both in this expedition, and in those which went out to survey the gold-producing provinces, the Spaniards found native chiefs who were willing to receive the messengers of Cortes, and who sent them back with gracious messages,—such was already the fame of the Spanish Conqueror throughout New Spain; but these same chiefs would not allow the officers of Montezuma to enter their country.

Harbourage in the Gulf of Mexico.

We may here mention a circumstance which, though slight in itself, serves well to illustrate the talents of Cortes for government, namely, that on the return of one of these exploring parties, finding that they gave a very favourable account of the fertility of the province they had visited, Cortes asked Montezuma to make a farm there for the King of Spain, where the cultiva-

Tillage.

* "Despues que en esta Tierra salté, siempre he trabajado de buscar Puerto en la Costa de ella."—Lorenzana, p. 93.

tion of maize, and of cacao, the money of the country, was immediately commenced. It would have been long before a mere soldier like Pedro de Alvarado would have thought of these things.

But the triumph of Cortes, and that use of his power for which he has been likened to Judas Maccabæus, was in the destruction of the hideous Mexican idols, the cleansing of their foul chapels, and the stern forbidding of human sacrifice. Montezuma himself and many of his lords were present at the downfall of these idols.* It must have been a glorious sight; and Cortes, who has enough evil to answer for, may on the other hand, be greatly praised for this deed, which alone must ever separate him from the Timours, Attilas, Genghis Khans, and other unmeaning, purposeless destroyers of mankind. Cortes tells his master Charles the Fifth, that Montezuma and the Mexican nobles assisted at the deposition of their idols with a joyful countenance. Great, then, must have been their command of countenance. What they felt in their hearts is not known to us; but any one who has observed mankind and seen that there is no stronger feeling, nor one which men are more proud of, than that which binds together a class, a sect, a guild, or a profession, must know what an intensity of enmity Cortes would thenceforward have to contend against in the priesthood

Destruction of idols.

* "El dicho Muteczuma, y muchos de los Principales de la Ciudad, estuvieron con migo hasta quitar los Idolos, y limpiar las Capillas, y poner las Imágenes, y todo con alegre semblante."—Lorenzana, p. 107.

Book X. Ch. 6. whom he had thus mocked and brought to nought. I much fear, too, that even if no human sacrifice took place on the sacred stones of the great pyramidal temple, yet that in many a dark and secret chamber the god of war was propitiated with the usual rites, and with no lack of human hearts laid before some rude and hastily-compounded effigy of this monster demon.

These plans for mining, farming, and surveying the country, and for converting the inhabitants, did not render Cortes inattentive to the first care he had on hand,—namely, that of self-defence. It was easy at a glance to see that the warlike science of the Spaniards, superior in all respects, would be remarkably so when manifested on the water; and, moreover, that a sure mode of withdrawal or escape would be provided for them, if they could have a few vessels launched upon the great Salt Lake of Mexico. The first care, therefore, of Cortes was to build brigantines that might go upon the Lake.

Cortes begins to build brigantines.

The position of Montezuma, one of the most curious recorded in history,* remained unchanged for many months. Cortes pursued with steadiness his ends, waiting for good news and for any reinforcements that might come to him from Spain and from Hispaniola. Meanwhile, Monte-

* He might be compared to one of the Merovingian Kings of France, with an all-powerful Mayor of the Palace; but then Montezuma's Mayor was a stranger who, as it were, had dropped amongst them like a meteoric stone.

zuma continued to govern as usual, only that he governed in the direction prescribed by Cortes, that is, as regarded those affairs in which the Spanish Commander took an interest.

It was impossible that such a mode of government could be otherwise than most distasteful to the chief persons governed. To have a foreign Mayor of the Palace lording it over them, was more than any people could be expected to submit to; but in this case there were also other causes of offence, each one sufficient to produce a revolution,—in the imprisonment of several royal personages, near relations of the King, and in the changes which Cortes had made, or attempted to make, in matters of religion. It must not be forgotten that the priesthood of Mexico was also the fountain of education; and it may be conceived with what ardour the young men of the great city would embrace the side of the priesthood. For youth, according to that strange inversion often seen in human affairs, is the time at which prejudices are strongest, the capability of judging being at its lowest,—all which might be of little matter, however, but that the readiness to act upon those prejudices is ten times greater then than at any other period of life. A youth does not understand holding a strong opinion, and not doing something to enforce it. Nor was the present an occasion when the older and graver men of a city would be likely to impose the least restraint upon the younger and the more impatient. The King imprisoned, the royal family maltreated, the chiefs made nought of, a foreign

Government of Cortes hateful to the Mexicans.

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enemy introduced into the capital, and, above all, the gods deposed and ridiculed, what could be expected but that the citizens of Mexico should be in a state of fervour and ebullition, hardly to be repressed even by the risk of immediate personal injury to their Monarch?

Montezuma himself bore his imprisonment quietly enough for some time. Cortes ventured to tempt him on several occasions with the offer of liberty, which the Monarch refused to profit by, alleging that, if he were in entire liberty, he might be compelled by the importunity of his vassals to take such steps against the Spaniards as he himself would not approve of.*

It must be confessed that Montezuma appears to have been a mean-spirited person. He may, however, have suspected that the proposal of Cortes was only made for the purpose of sounding him, which certainly was the case. As the days went on, his nobles became more importunate, his priests more imperative, his own discontent more developed; and this feeling was probably augmented by various little slights to his dignity of which history makes no mention, but upon which, like all monarchs, he doubtless laid much stress.

Change in Montezuma.

There certainly was a change at this period in Montezuma's conduct, and such are the motives for it which may be deduced from the account of

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* "Sus Vasallos le importunassen, ó le induciessen á que hiciesse alguna cosa contra su voluntad, que fuesse fuera del servicio de V. A., y que él tenia propuesto de servir á Vuestra Magestad en todo lo á él posible." —Lorenzana, p. 88.

an historian,* who, whatever his inaccuracies, had at least the advantage, as a chaplain of Cortes, of hearing his version of the matter. The Chaplain assigns three motives for this change in Montezuma; the continued importunities of his people, an interview which the King had with the Devil, and the mutability of human nature. It is said by the Spanish historians, that Montezuma secretly prepared an army of an hundred thousand men; but this is not at all likely, as it could hardly have been done without the cognizance of the two thousand Tlascalans who were in the city.†

The motives for that change.

One day, in the sixth month of his imprisonment, the King, accompanied by several of his nobles, went into the square of the palace, and sent for Cortes. This was a very unusual proceeding. Cortes was accustomed to pay his court to Montezuma once or twice in the day, but had not, I imagine, ever been sent for before. "I do not like this novelty," he exclaimed; "please God there may be no mischief in it." Accompanied by a few Spaniards, Cortes went

* Gomara.

† I agree with what Clavigero says upon this matter, who seems in general to show much judgment in writing upon these affairs. "Quasi tutti gli storici Spagnuoli dicono, que allorchè il Re fece chiamar Cortès per intimargli l'ordine di partire, avea allestito un esercito per farsi ubbidir per forza, se mai vi fosse qualche resistenza, ma vi è una gran varietà fra loro, poichè alcuni affermano, ch'erano in arme cento mila uomini, altri scemano questo numero della metà, ed altri finalmente il riducono a cinque mila. Io mi persuado che vi sia stata in fatti qualche truppa allestita, non però per ordine del Re, ma soltanto d'alcuni Nobili di quelli, che aveano preso un più grand' impegno in questo affare." — Clavigero, *Storia Antica del Messico*, tom. 3, lib. 9, p. 112.

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immediately into the Monarch's presence, who took him by the hand, led him into a room where seats were placed for them both, and then addressed him thus:—"I pray you, take your departure from this my city and land, for my gods are very angry that I keep you here. Ask of me what you may want, and I will give it you. Do not think that I say this to you in any jest, but very much in earnest. Wherefore, fulfil my desire, that so it may be done in every contingency."

Montezuma requests Cortes to depart.

Cortes, a man whom events might surprize, but could not discompose, replied at once: "I have heard what you have said, and thank you much for it. Name a time when you wish us to depart, and so it shall be." To this, the polite Monarch replied again, "I do not wish you to go but at your own time" (meaning, he did not wish to hurry them away). "Take the time that seems to you necessary, and when you do go, I will give to you, Cortes, two loads of gold, and one to each of your companions." By the time that the conversation had advanced thus far, an excellent excuse for delay occurred to Cortes. "You are already well aware, my Lord," he said, "how I destroyed my ships, when I first landed in your territory. And so now we have need of other ships in order to return to our own country. Wherefore, I should be obliged if you would give us workmen to cut and work the wood. I myself have ship-builders, and when the ships are built, we will take our departure. Inform your deities and your vassals of this." Montezuma

Excuse of Cortes for delay.

assented: Cortes was provided with Mexican workmen who were sent to Vera Cruz under Spanish officers, and the building of ships was commenced in earnest, though it is highly improbable that Cortes had the slightest intention of taking his departure in them.

It has been said, and was, I dare say, commonly reported amongst the Spanish soldiers, that Cortes told Montezuma on this occasion, that he would have to accompany the Spaniards in order to be presented to the King of Spain; but the whole course of the narrative contradicts this statement, and it would have been perfect madness in Cortes at this juñcture to make Montezuma so desperate as such a threat would infallibly have made him. Cortes no doubt relied upon palliatives and delays, in the hope of receiving, in the meantime, succour from home. Throughout the interview, according to the accounts that remain of it from the two most credible historians, it is discernible that the tone of the Mexican King towards Cortes was altered from that which it had been.* The Spanish soldiers appreciated the danger of their position, and went about much depressed (*muy pensativos*), and fully on their guard against any sudden attack. Indeed, this little body of men lived in

Montezuma's bearing towards Cortes changed.

* Bernal Diaz puts the following brusque speech into Montezuma's mouth:—"Dixo que le daria los carpinteros, y que luego despachasse; y no huviesse las palabras, sino obras."—Cap. 108. And Gomara says that Cortes remarked the change:—"No le pareció, que le recibia con el talento que otras veces."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 94.

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their armour, and formed such habits of wariness, that years of peace and lordship could not efface the watchful customs which they had acquired at this eventful period of their lives, so that one of them afterwards describes how he could never pass a night in bed, but must get up, and walk about in the open air, and gaze at the stars.*

If such were the feelings of the common men, what must have been those of their Commander? What agonies of sleepless indecision must have beset his couch, unless, indeed, he were composed of different material from that of other men? A slight disturbance in the street, a momentary outbreak of fanaticism, a quarrel in the market-place between some Tlascalan and some Mexican —and the flame of discord, once aroused, might spread throughout the city, consume the little band of Spaniards and their allies, and leave a great conquest unfulfilled. Then would the name and fame of Cortes be no more than those of some of the minor heroes in this story, such as Ojeda or Nicuesa, whose history is tedious to tell, but who must be spoken of, as they filled up the trenches over which wiser or more fortunate men marched to the accomplishment of great designs.

Danger of a sudden outbreak.

It was not, however, by any enemies in the city of Mexico that the fortunes of Cortes were next to be assailed. He had entered Mexico on the 8th of November, of the year 1519: it was

* "Y otra cosa digo, que no puedo dormir, sino un rato de la noche, que me tengo de levantar á ver el cielo y estrellas, y me he de passear un rato al sereno, y esto sin poner en la cabeça el bonete, ni paño, ni cosa ninguna." —Bernal Diaz, cap. 108.

now the beginning of May, 1520; and, in these few months, he had accomplished more than any conqueror, before him or after him, ever did with so small a force at his command. Meanwhile he had heard nothing from Cuba or from the mother country; and it was certain that whatever should come, either in the way of news or of supplies, would prove a considerable succour or a great hinderance. A few days after the unpleasant interview with Montezuma, above recorded, he received intelligence of a most important and perplexing event; namely, that eighteen ships had arrived in the Bay of San Juan, not far from his little colony at Vera Cruz. The alarming news (alarming on account of the number of the vessels) was confirmed by a letter he received from a Spaniard whom he had appointed to watch that coast.* This slight circumstance affords a striking instance of the foresight of Cortes; and then the thoughtless exclaim, such persons are fortunate! Cortes instantly despatched messengers in different directions to gain further intelligence about these vessels. Fifteen days passed without any messenger returning—fifteen days of terrible anxiety for Cortes. At last Montezuma communicated to the Spanish General, that he was aware of the arrival of these new comers, and that they had disembarked in the port of San Juan. Moreover, the Monarch was able to show

Unwelcome news for Cortes.

Landing of an armament on the coast of New Spain.

* "Me trajo una Carta de un Español, que yo tenia puesto en la Costa, para que si Navíos veniessen, les diesse razon de mí, y de aquella Villa, que allí estaba cerca de aquel Puerto, porque no se perdiessen."—Lorenzana, p. 116.

Cortes a picture of the forces that had disembarked, which consisted of eighty horses, eight hundred men, and ten or twelve cannon. The messengers who brought this news to Mexico added a piece of intelligence very significant of evil for Cortes; namely, that the messengers whom he had sent were with the newly-arrived strangers, and that the General would not let them come away.

There was now no excuse for Cortes to delay his return on account of the want of vessels, and so, it is said, Montezuma intimated; but it is probable that if the King felt any joy at this opportunity of getting rid of an enemy, or at least of a very importunate friend, he also had a terrible apprehension that the arrival of this additional force from Spain boded no good to himself. On the day when this intelligence was communicated, Montezuma and Cortes dined together, and were particularly gracious to each other; but dismay and apprehension waited unbidden at the board, and leavened alike the smiles of the timid Monarch and of the crafty General.*

Cortes lost no time in despatching Father Olmedo with a letter to his newly arrived coun-

* I have no doubt, however, that, like most wise men, Cortes knew how to postpone his anxieties as much as possible; and that, whatever the delicate Indian King might do, Cortes was sure to make a good dinner. His appetite, like that of most great men who exert their minds, was very vigorous.—"Fué mui gran comedor, i templado en el beber, teniendo abundancia."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 238. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

trymen, in which he informed their General, whoever he might be, of what had happened since his own arrival in the country, of the towns he had gained and pacified, and of the treasures which he was in charge of for the King of Spain. He then demanded on what authority this General came, and whether he were in need of anything? The good Father departed, and it is conjectured that he carried inducements of a very solid kind to be distributed amongst the subordinates of the General, in case he should prove intractable.

Cortes sends Father Olmedo to the General of the armament.

I do not doubt that the fears of Cortes predominated over his hopes. He had left too much hostility behind him, not to have great occasion for fear upon any arrival of his countrymen. His fears were justified. This formidable armament was sent by his former master, and now bitter enemy, the Governor of Cuba. It originally consisted of nineteen ships, carrying fourteen hundred soldiers, twenty pieces of cannon, eighty cavalry, and a hundred and sixty muskets and cross-bows; but the Mexican painters were right in describing but eighteen vessels, for one of them had been lost. This considerable force had been entrusted to Pamphilo de Narvaez, the same man whose expedition to pacificate Cuba Las Casas accompanied; and his instructions were to seize Cortes and his companions. The danger to Cortes was imminent.

The armament was sent by Velazquez.

Pamphilo de Narvaez its commander.

But Narvaez was quite another man from Cortes, and proceeded at once to such extremities, as probably to weaken his influence over his own

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men, and even to cause a protestation to be made from an important personage in the fleet, the Licentiate Ayllon, whom, however, he put into confinement and sent away. Narvaez sent a flattering message to Montezuma, telling him that he would release him, and that he came to seize upon Cortes. He also sought to gain the garrison at Vera Cruz, but they were true to their Commander. Not so the Cempoalans, in whose town Narvaez took up his quarters. They very naturally took part with the larger force, and, as Cortes remarks, desired to be on the conquering side (*querian ser á viva quien vence*).

His proceedings against Cortes.

It was time for Cortes to appear upon the scene of greatest danger; and, accordingly, quitting Mexico with but seventy of his own men, he commended those whom he left and his treasures to Montezuma's good offices, as to one who was a faithful vassal to the King of Spain.* This parting speech seems most audacious, but a plenary audacity was part of the wisdom of Cortes. At Cholula he came up with his lieutenant, Juan Velazquez, and his men, joined company with them, and pushed on towards Cempoala. When he approached the town, he prepared to make an attack by night on the position which Narvaez occupied, and which was no other than the great

Cortes quits Mexico to confront Narvaez.

* "Que mirase, que él era Vasallo de Vuestra Alteza, y que agora habia de recibir mercedés de Vuestra Magestad por los Servicios, que le habia hecho."—Lorenzana, p. 123.

temple at Cempoala. Cortes and his men knew the position well. Narvaez must, I think, have displaced the gods, for he occupied three or four of the towers of the temple. This distribution of his forces was fatal to him.

Nature of the attack on Narvaez.

On the other side the plan was, that sixty young men, chosen for their activity, should make themselves masters of the cannon, and then that Sandoval, one of the bravest lieutenants of Cortes, should make an attack upon the tower where Narvaez was to be found. Round this tower eighteen large cannon were placed, but so prompt was the attack, that though it did not find the enemy unprepared, there was not time to fire more than four of the guns, and for the most part the shots went over the heads of the attacking party. The artillery being in the hands of Cortes's men, Sandoval succeeded in forcing his way up the tower, and capturing Narvaez. Meanwhile Cortes held the base; and the enemy, who do not seem to have been very willing or alert, and who were led to suppose that their Commander had fallen, were mastered so speedily and so effectually, that Cortes had but three men killed and Narvaez but fifteen. During the action, the moon, as if she had been a partizan of Cortes and was weary of looking down upon the horrid sacrifices which he was come to put an end to, withdrew herself behind the clouds, and suffered the Narvaez faction, new to the land, to believe that certain luminous creatures (*cocayos*) were the glittering of numerous muskets in the hands of the Cortesians. No sooner, however, was the action decided, than she

Narvaez defeated.

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came forth in all her splendour, to illustrate and honour the victory.

In the encounter Narvaez lost an eye: he was afterwards sent as a prisoner to Vera Cruz. His men, not without resistance on the part of some of them, ultimately ranged themselves under the banner of Cortes; and thus was a great danger* turned into a welcome succour. Cortes received the conquered troops in the most winning manner, and created an enthusiasm in his favour. One of the soldiers of Narvaez, a negro and a comical fellow, danced and shouted for joy, crying, "Where are the Romans who with such small numbers have ever achieved so great a victory?"

Narvaez's men attach themselves to Cortes

The first thought of Cortes was to divide his troops; for, as the vanquished far outnumbered the victors, some disturbance might easily occur, and the men of Narvaez could not yet be relied upon as firm adherents. Cortes accordingly employed two hundred Spaniards in founding a town at Coatzacualco, the same spot to which he had before sent an expedition. He also despatched two hundred men to Vera Cruz, where he had given orders that the vessels should be transported; and two hundred he sent to another place. His next care was to despatch a messenger to

* How great the danger was, may be appreciated by "the winning words full of promise" which Cortes uttered in his speech to the men previous to the attack. For those who have time to study history minutely, the speech is well worth referring to. It was made on horseback, and therefore was not long.—See Bernal Diaz, cap. 122.

Mexico, to give an account of his victory, of which, at his suggestion, a painted representation* was sent to Montezuma by the Indians of Cempoala.

* "Aviendo pintado en un Lienço lo que pasaba, á Narvaez herido, y aprisionado, la Gente rendida; á Cortes Victorioso, y apoderado de la Artillería."—TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 66.

CHAPTER VII.

DURING THE ABSENCE OF CORTES THE MEXICANS REBEL—SIEGE OF THE SPANISH GARRISON—CORTES RETURNS TO MEXICO.

IN fourteen days after the defeat of Narvaez the messenger of Cortes returned to him, bringing from Alvarado the unexpected and unwelcome intelligence, that the Spanish garrison in Mexico were besieged by the citizens, and were in the utmost peril; and that the Indians had set fire to the Spanish quarters in many places, and undermined them. Much of the provisions, he added, had been taken by the enemy; the four brigantines had been burnt; and, although the combat had ceased, the Spaniards were rigorously invested. Finally, Alvarado implored Cortes, for the love of God, to lose no time in succouring them. The causes of this outbreak will furnish a curious illustration of Mexican habits and practices, and require to be told at some length.

Spanish garrison besieged by the Mexicans.

It is seldom that the religion of a people is so intimately connected with its warfare as to form part of the same story, but in the case both of the Mexicans and Peruvians, transactions of the highest military importance grew out of the pro-

ceedings at religious festivals. This is a felicity for the narrative, as it takes these religious ceremonies, which were so large a part of the life of the people, out of the list of mere description of manners and political customs, and brings them naturally into the course of events.

The month Toxcatl, in which Cortes was absent from Mexico, was the especial month devoted to religious services. It corresponded nearly with the period of Easter; "as if," says the pious monk* from whom we learn these particulars, "the Devil wished to imitate the Christian festival of Easter in order to forget or dissemble the grief which the Christian commemoration caused him."

Great festival to Tezcatlipuk.

The Mexican divinity who was chiefly honoured in this month was Tezcatlipuk, and the mode of honouring him was as follows. Ten days before the chief day of the festival, a priest sallied forth from the temple, clad after the fashion of the idol, with flowers in his hand, and with a little flute made of clay, of a very shrill pitch. This priest having turned first to the east sounded his flute; then he turned to the west, and did the same thing; then to the north, and then to the south. Having thus signified that he called upon the attention of all mankind, and required them to celebrate worthily this festival, he remained in silence for a time. Then he placed his hand on the ground, and

* Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana.*

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taking some earth in it, put it in his mouth and ate it, as a token of humility and adoration. All who heard him, did the same thing; and, with the most energetic demonstrations of grief and entreaty, implored the obscurity of night and the wind not to desert them nor forget them, but to deliver them immediately from the troubles of life, and carry them to the place of rest,* "as if," adds the indignant monk, "the accursed one could give that which in truth he does not possess for himself."

At the sound of the flute sinners became sorrowful.

At the sound of this little flute, which seems as if it represented for them the "still small voice" of conscience, all sinners became very sorrowful and much afraid; and during the ten days that this lasted, their constant prayer to Tezcatlipuk was, that their faults should be hidden from the eyes and the knowledge of men, and pardoned by his gracious clemency.† There is a strange wisdom sometimes in these barbarous rites; and here we have an instance of that just fear of the intolerance of his fellow-man (who, moreover, is obliged to pretend to be

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* "Invocando á la obscuridad de la noche, y al viento (ceremonia propria de Gentiles, como leemos averlo hecho aquella Reina de Cartago, en la celebracion de su muerte, y Sacrificio) y rogábanles con ahinco, que no los desamparasen, ni olvidasen, ó que los librasen presto de los trabajos de la Vida, y los llevasen al lugar del descanso."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14.

† "No pedian otra cosa á este Dios, sino que fuesen sus delitos ocultos de los ojos, y sabiduría de los Hombres, y perdonados de su misericordia, y clemencia."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14.

worse in this respect than he is) which leads the sinner to confide in God, and to fear his fellow-creatures.

Every day this ceremony of the flute was continued, and every day sighs and sobs and agony of soul were offered up, "although," as the monk remarks, with but a shallow reading of the heart of man, "this grief of theirs was only for corporal punishment, which their gods gave them, and not for eternal punishment, for they did not believe that in another life there was a punishment so strict as the Faith teaches us; which, if they had believed, so many of them would not have offered themselves so willingly to death as they did offer themselves, but would have been afraid of the torments which they have to endure for ever."* This remark (of the readiness of the Mexicans to encounter death) is well worthy of notice, as it tends a little to exculpate their practice of human sacrifice; and one is glad, for the sake of human nature, to find anything which tends to explain that form of atrocity.

Readiness of Mexicans to die.

The ten days having thus passed, the eve before the festival arrived, when the Mexican

New vestments for Tezcatlipuk.

* "Aunque este dolor de ellos, no era sino por la pena corporal, que les daban, y no por la eterna, por no tener creído que en la otra vida huviese pena tan estrecha, como nos la enseña la Fé: que á creerlo, no se ofrecieran tantos de su voluntad á la muerte, como se ofrecian, con temor de los tormentos, que avian de pasar perdurablemente." — TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14.

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lords brought new vestments for the idol, and adorned him with feathers, bracelets, and other ornaments, the old ones being put away in a chest, and much honoured. Then the priests drew aside the curtain which was at the entrance of the chapel where the idol stood, and showed it to the assembled people. After this, a priest of great authority came forth with roses in his hand and sounded the little flute with the same ceremony as on the preceding days.

On the ensuing morning, the great day of the festival having now come, the priests brought out a splendid litter, put the idol upon it, and, taking the burden upon their shoulders, brought it down to the foot of the steps of the great temple. Then came all the youths and maidens who were devoted to the service of the temple, and bearing a thick rope made of strings of roasted maize, performed a circuit round the litter. This rope was called after the month Toxcatl, and was a symbol of sterility (Toxcatl meaning a "dry thing"); and the whole drift of the ceremony was to implore Tezcatlipuk, their Jupiter, to give them gracious rain from heaven.

The main object of the festival.

They placed a similar string of maize upon the neck of the idol, and a garland of the same material upon his head. All the youths and maidens were beautifully dressed, and were adorned with garlands of maize. The chief men of the city wore ornaments of the same kind, having these garlands on their heads and necks, and in

their hands nosegays of the same material, very curiously constructed.*

Everywhere, upon the ground, were scattered the thorns of the aloe, in order that devout people might shed their blood in honour of the day.

Then commenced a great procession, the idol being carried in front, with two priests continually incensing it; and, as they threw the incense on high, they prayed that their petitions might go up to heaven like as the smoke ascended.

So far all was innocent enough; but now came the saddest and strangest part of the ceremony. For a year previous to the day of festival, a youth had been chosen, the most beautiful and graceful amongst the captives, who was called the Image of Tezcatlipuk. The youth was instructed in all the arts of gracious courtesy;† and, as he passed along the street, beautifully adorned, and accompanied by the greatest personages, all who met him fell on their knees before him and adored him, while he responded with graciousness to their adorations.

Choice of a victim.

Twenty days before this Festival they gave him four wives, and taking off the robes which he had worn in imitation of their god, Tezcatlipuk, they clothed him in the handsomest

* "Y en las manos Ramilletes de lo mismo, que son de grande ingenio, y curiosidad."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14.

† "Le enseñaban todo primor, y suma cortesía en el hablar."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14.

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dresses that a man amongst the Mexicans could wear.

His transient felicity.

For these twenty days he lived in all joy and felicity with his wives, and if there were any satirists in Mexico, it is probable that they pronounced these marriages to be the happiest ever known in that beautiful Venice of the western world; but if happy, a dreadful happiness it must have been. The five days before the Festival were spent in festivities in his honour, at which all the Mexican court were his companions, save the King himself, who alone stood apart, and kept his state.*

But those days of fierce and transient felicity were now over; the procession was ended; then came a banquet; which also being concluded, the great event of the day took place. The poor youth came forward on the summit of the temple, and made a dignified bow to the assembled people, resuming his representation of the majesty of Tezcatlipuk. Behind him stalked

The sacrifice.

five murdering ministers of sacrifice, who threw him upon the fatal stone, when the chief priest came forward with great reverence, opened the breast of the victim, and took out the heart.†

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* "Cinco dias ántes que muriese hacíanle Fiesta, y Banquetes, en lugares frescos, y deleitosos, en los quales Dias le acompañaban con mas concurso los Señores, y Principales, y casi toda la Corte, sino era el Rei, y Señor Supremo, que este, guardando su Autoridad, no le acompañaba."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14.

† "Llegaba el Summo Sacerdote con grande reverencia, y abríale el pecho, y sacaba el coraçon, y hacia con él la ceremonia acostumbrada." — Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14.

The priests were wont to hurl down from the temple the bodies of the persons sacrificed, but on this occasion they carried it down with much submission and reverence to the last step of the temple. It was then beheaded; and, according to the narrative, the body, as some sacred thing, was cooked and divided amongst the Mexican lords.

Conclusion of festival.

Lastly, there was a solemn dance in which the youths dedicated to Tezcatlipuk took a part. The great lords joined in this dance,* and thus the Festival was ended.

In ordinary years this poor devoted youth was the only person sacrificed; but every fourth year, which was considered a year of jubilee, several persons were added to the sacrifice.†

Such were the proceedings, partly horrible,

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* It is to be noted that this dance was celebrated in a place set apart for that purpose, ("En un lugar particular, y consagrado para este proposito"—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 10, cap. 14,) and apparently not in the great court of the temple.

† It is not very important to settle which of two false gods was the one whose day of festival was chosen by Alvarado for his attack upon the Mexican nobles. Some of the best authorities represent this transaction to have occurred on the festival of Huitzilopochtli, the Mexican god of war. But they may have been deceived by following Fr. Bernardino de Sahagun, whose accuracy, as regards any historical fact, is not to be relied upon, and who, in the next sentence, makes a statement which is totally contrary to fact. "Motezuzoma mandó que se hiciese esta fiesta para dar contento á los Españoles."—*Hist. Universal de las cosas de Nueva-España.* Kingsborough, *Collection*, vol. 7, cap. 19.

Nearly the whole of the month of Toxcatl was devoted to religious festivals. The greatest festival, however, in the month, *and the one that came first*, was that in honour of Tezcatlipuk; and it seems to me almost inconceiv-

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partly ludicrous, which took place every year in the month of Toxcatl, and for leave to celebrate which the Mexican lords asked permission from Pedro de Alvarado, who, in the absence of Cortes, was the chief in command, and who had been called by the Mexicans "Tonatiuh," "the sun-faced man," as he was of a ruddy complexion.

The Mexicans ask permission of Alvarado to celebrate a festival.

Now Alvarado was a determined, rather than a wise man, and he was at present placed in very difficult circumstances, requiring both wisdom and forbearance. It was impossible but that the Mexicans must have exhibited a changed bearing towards the Spaniards since the time of their arrival, and especially since the departure of Cortes. The Mexicans had found out that the Spaniards were mortal; they had discovered that horses were but animals; they had ascertained by the coming of Narvaez that the Spaniards

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able that Alvarado should have allowed this festival to be celebrated (in which there were large assemblages of people), and then that the Mexicans should have had occasion to ask permission for the holding of the second festival. The Mexican historian, Ixtlilxochitl, merely describes the festival under the general head of Toxcatl, ("Pendant que Cortes était à la Vera Cruz, les Mexicains célébrèrent une de leurs principales fêtes nommée *Toxcatl*, qui tombait le jour de Pâques." — *Hist. des Chichimèques*, cap. 88. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*) which would correspond better to the festival of the Mexican Jupiter (Tezcatlipuk) than to that of the Mexican Mars. See Torquemada, lib. 10, cap. 14.

In whatever way the question may be settled, and an alarming amount of learning might be expended upon it, I have preferred giving an account of the rites of the Mexican Jupiter in preference to those of the Mexican Mars, as the former are more curious and more significant.

In both cases there was a victim, a procession, and a solemn dance. The victim, however, in Jupiter's festival, was adored as a god during his year of preparation, while the victim to the god of war did not meet with that extraordinary honour.

were not united. Their wrongs were manifest. They saw the Spaniards grow richer day by day. They probably discerned that the offer of Cortes to quit the country was a mere pretence. But that which was the indignity of indignities in their eyes was the deposition of their deities, and the elevation of what they would consider as the Spanish gods.

Sentiments of the Mexicans at this period.

All these feelings would be more likely to be manifested, as the numbers of the Spaniards were diminished by the departure of Cortes; and it was a few days after that event, that some of the Spaniards began to discern or to imagine, that the Indians did not show them that respect and veneration which they had been accustomed to receive.* In truth, no respect or love can fulfil the requirements of fear; but I think that in this case, it was a just fear, and that revolt, if not already resolved upon, was imminent. The historian Herrera says that many Indian women declared to the truth of this conspiracy, and "that from women the truth is always learnt."† I do not know how that may be, but it is clear that throughout the conquest of America the Indian women several times betrayed their

Indian women betray the secrets of their countrymen.

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* "Pasados pocos Dias, empeçaron á notar algunos Españoles, que los Indios no les tenian el respeto, y veneracion, á que estaban acostumbrados, ántes de salir Cortés de Mexico."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 66.

† "Pero la verdad fué, que pensaron matar los Castellanos, para lo qual tenian sus armas escondidas en las casas, cerca del templo: y esto afirmaron muchas mugeras, de las quales se sabia siempre la verdad."—Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 8.

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country under circumstances which do not seem to me to indicate so much a love of truth as a love of what is personal and near, and an indifference to what is abstract and remote,—a disposition which has been noted equally of all women in all countries. In a word, they loved their lovers, and did not care much about their country; and, accordingly, on several critical occasions, betrayed the one to the other with a recklessness which would be inexcusable in the other sex, but which is to be accounted for, as above, in them. If there had been Spanish women in the invading armies, the Indians might have had a chance of learning something from them; but, as it was, the betrayal was necessarily all on one side.

The hereditary enemies of Mexico, the Tlascalans, no doubt, did what they could to deepen the impressions made on the Spaniards by the changed demeanour of the Mexicans. They were at hand to magnify every ill report, and to counsel any and every act of violence.

Alvarado's policy.

Alvarado resolved to strike a great blow, and mindful, perhaps, of the proverb, "He who attacks conquers" (*Quien acomete vence*),* resolved to take advantage of the Tezcatlipuk Festival, to surprize and slay a great number of the Mexican nobility. It is quite probable that this Festival was looked upon by the Spanish Commander with great suspicion, and even that the demeanour of the Indians during the early days of the Festival

* See Bernal Diaz, cap. 125.

(which of course was not explained till long after by the researches of learned men) served to increase the Spanish suspicions.

I have no doubt that the horrid sacrifices in use among the Mexicans had made a deep impression on the Spanish soldiers; and that many a brave man, who would have faced death with unconcerned gallantry in the battle field, had an extreme dread of being offered up as a sacrifice to the idols with the unpronounceable names. We may be sure that alarming rumours, which have even found their way into grave history, were loudly current then amongst the soldiers,—such as that the Indian women had their cooking vessels ready to boil the bodies of the Spaniards in.* In the affairs of life, what is said and what is thought are almost of more importance than what is done. Most histories are too wise, concerning themselves too much with what really happened, and not taking heed enough of the wild reports and rumours which were nearly as good as facts for the time they were believed in.

The current reports of the day a great part of history.

It is, therefore, no matter of surprize to hear that when the sacred dance,† above described as the closing ceremony of the feast to the Mexican Jupiter, was being celebrated, Alvarado's troops made an onslaught upon the weaponless Mexican

Alvarado attacks the Mexicans at the festival.

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* "Indias tenian prevenidas, que cuidaban de Ollas, llenas de su Brevage, para cocer á los Castellanos, y comérselos."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 66.

† Some authors have supposed that this dance was the one which they called Macevaliztli, which means "reward with labour" (merecimiento con trabajo). See Gomara, *Crónica de Nueva-España*, cap. 104. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

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lords, and slew no less than six hundred of them. This atrocity, as might have been expected, was the signal for an instant outbreak on the part of the populace. Alvarado was not skilled, like his master Cortes, in the art of creating and maintaining terror; but, indeed, the slightest knowledge of the world might have told him, that such a wholesale massacre, destroying the chief men, and, therefore, the restraining power over the Mexican populace, would, so far from quelling revolt, be likely to give it ample breathing room. The little garrison of Spaniards, instead of being masters of the town, were instantly in the condition of a distressed and besieged party, and it would have gone very hard with them, if Montezuma had not endeavoured to make his furious subjects desist from the attack.*

The populace rise.

Montezuma interferes.

Such was the disastrous state of things communicated to Cortes in return for the tidings which he had sent to Mexico of his victory. Indeed, the life of Cortes was like a buoyant substance borne on a tumultuous sea: if it descended from the crest of one wave to the hollow of another, it did not remain depressed, but mounted up again; and, when the bystander turned to look, it was perhaps on the summit of a still higher and mightier wave than before. As may be imagined, he lost no time on this occasion in seeking to

* This is confirmed by three distinct authorities, each of great weight: Bernal Diaz, cap. 125; Ixtlilxochitl, *Histoire de Chichimèques*, part 2, cap. 88; Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*, and Cortes himself, Lorenzana, p. 131.

repair the evils which had befallen the Spanish arms in Mexico. He recalled the expeditions which he had sent out; he addressed the former followers of Narvaez, showing them that here was an opportunity for service both honourable and lucrative; and, the instant necessity for action being an immediate bond of union amongst brave men,* he forthwith commenced his march for the capital. At Tlascala, all was friendly to him; he there reviewed his men and found that they amounted to thirteen hundred soldiers, amongst whom were ninety-six horsemen, eighty cross-bowmen, and about eighty musketeers.† Cortes marched with great strides to Mexico, and entered the city at the head of this formidable force on the 24th of June, 1520, the day of John the Baptist.

Cortes collects his forces.

Marches rapidly to Mexico, June, 1520.

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* "En esta tan urgente necesidad, Amigos, y no Amigos, con gran voluntad se le ofrecieron, y se armaron los que no lo estaban." — TORQUEMADA, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, c. 67.

† Accounts vary very much about the number of these forces; the one adopted here is from Bernal Diaz. Cortes himself mentions but five hundred foot soldiers and seventy horsemen— (LORENZANA, p. 131); but it seems to me that this must be incorrect.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RECEPTION OF CORTES IN MEXICO—GENERAL ATTACK UPON THE SPANISH QUARTERS—FLIGHT FROM MEXICO TO TLACUBA—BATTLE OF OTUMBA—CORTES RETURNS TO TLASCALA.

VERY different was the reception of Cortes on this occasion from that on his first entry into Mexico, when Montezuma had gone forth with all pomp to meet him. Now, the Indians stood silently in the doorways of their houses, and the bridges between the houses were taken up.* Even when he arrived at his own quarters, he found the gates barred, so strict had been the siege, and he had to demand an entry. Alvarado appeared upon the battlements, and asked if Cortes came in the same liberty with which he went out, and if he was still their General. Cortes replied, "Yes," that he came with victory, and with increased forces. The gates were then opened, and Cortes and his companions entered. He had to hear the excuses of Alvarado for conduct which a prudent man like Cortes

His reception there.

* "Vieron las puentes de unas casas á otras, quitadas, y otras malas señales." — Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, tom. 2, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 8.

must have disapproved, but which he did not dare to punish then. His aspect was gloomy, and one who must have seen him that day, describes him by an epithet which, in the original meaning, was exceedingly applicable. Bernal Diaz says that Cortes was *mohino*, an adjective which is applied to one who plays in a game against many others.

The alternation of success and disappointment seems for once to have tried the equal temper and patient mind of the Spanish General. He sent a cold, or an uncourteous, message to Montezuma, the foolishness of which he seems afterwards to have been well aware of, and, with the candour of a great man about his own errors, to have acknowledged.*

At the moment, however, Cortes could give but little attention to anything but the pressing wants of the garrison. He lodged his own men in their old quarters, and placed in the great temple the additional forces he had brought with him. The next morning he sent out a messenger to Vera Cruz, probably with a view to ascertain how he would be received in the streets; but not more than half an hour had elapsed before the messenger returned, being wounded, and crying out that all the citizens were in revolt, and that the drawbridges were raised.

Cortes sends out a messenger to Vera Cruz,

Who is driven back.

It appears likely, that before Cortes despatched

* "Muchos han dicho, aver oydo dezir a Hernando Cortés, que si en llegando visitara á Motezuma, sus cosas passaran bien: y que lo dexó estimándole en poco, por hallarse tan poderoso." —Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 8.

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this messenger, he had sent a threatening message to Montezuma, desiring him to give orders for the attendance of the people in the market-place, in order that the Spaniards might be able to buy provisions. Montezuma's reply was that he and the greater part of his servants were prisoners, and that Cortes should set free and send out whomsoever he wished to entrust with the execution of the necessary orders. Cortes chose for this purpose Montezuma's brother, the Lord of Iztapalapa; but when that Prince came among the citizens, his message was not listened to, and he was not permitted by the people to return, but was chosen as their leader.

Montezuma's brother chosen by the citizens as their leader.

After the return of the messenger whom Cortes had sent out to Vera Cruz, the Mexicans advanced in great numbers towards the Spanish quarters, and commenced an attack upon them. Cortes, who was not at all given to exaggeration, says that neither the streets nor the terraced roofs (*azoteas*) were visible, being entirely obscured by the people who were upon them; that the multitude of stones was so great, that it seemed as if it rained stones; and that the arrows came so thickly, that the walls and the courts were full of them, rendering it difficult to move about. Cortes made two or three desperate sallies, and was wounded. The Mexicans succeeded in setting fire to the fortress, which was with difficulty subdued, and they would have scaled the walls at the point where the fire had done most damage, but for a large force of cross-bowmen, musketeers, and artillery, which Cortes threw forward to meet the

The Mexicans attack the garrison.

danger. The Mexicans at last drew back, leaving no fewer than eighty Spaniards wounded in this first encounter.

The ensuing morning, as soon as it was daylight, the attack was renewed. There was no occasion for the artillerymen to take any particular aim, for the Mexicans advanced in such dense masses, that they could not be missed.* The gaps made in these masses were instantly filled up again; and practised veterans in the Spanish army, who had served in Italy, in France, and against the Grand Turk, declared that they had never seen men close up their ranks as these Mexicans did after the discharges of artillery upon them.† Again, and with considerable success, Cortes made sallies from the fortress in the course of the day; but at the end of it there were about sixty more of his men to be added to the list of wounded, already large, from the injuries received on the preceding day.

Distinguished bravery of the Mexican troops.

The third day was devoted by the ingenious Cortes to making three moveable fortresses, called *mantas*, which, he thought, would enable his men, with less danger, to contend against the Mexicans on their terraced roofs.‡ Each of these little for-

Cortes constructs moveable fortresses.

* "Los Artilleros no tenian necesidad de puntería, sino asestar en los Esquadrones de los Indios."—Lorenzana, p. 135.

† "Porque unos tres ó quatro soldados que se avian hallado en Italia, que allí estavan con nosotros, juraron muchas vezes á Dios, que guerras tan bravosas jamas avian visto en algunas que se avian hallado entre Christianos, y contra la artillería del Rey de Francia, ni del gran Turco; ni gente, como aquellos Indios, con tanto ánimo cerrar los esquadrones vieron."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 126.

‡ A private house in Mexico was often a little fortress in itself, and could not easily be destroyed.

tresses afforded shelter for twenty persons; and was manned with cross-bowmen, musketeers, pikemen, and labourers who carried pick-axes and bars of iron for piercing through the houses, and destroying the barricades in the streets. As may be imagined, the besiegers did not look on idly, and the combat did not cease while these machines were being made.

Montezuma comes forth to address the people.

It was on this day that the unfortunate Montezuma, either at the request of Cortes, or of his own accord, came out upon a battlement, and addressed the people. He was surrounded by Spanish soldiers, and was at first received with all respect and honour by his people. When silence ensued, he addressed them in very loving words, bidding them discontinue the attack, and assuring them that the Spaniards would depart from Mexico. It is not probable that much of his discourse could have been heard by the raging multitude. But, on the other hand, he was able to hear what their leaders had to say, as four of the chiefs approached near to him, and with tears addressed him, declaring their grief at his imprisonment. They told him that they had chosen his brother as their leader, that they had vowed to their gods not to cease fighting until the Spaniards were all destroyed, and that each day they prayed to their gods to keep him free and harmless. They added, that when their designs were accomplished, he should be much more their Lord than heretofore, and that he should then pardon them. Amongst the crowd, however, were doubtless, men who viewed the con-

Speech of four of his lords.

duct of Montezuma with intense disgust, or who thought that they had already shown too much disrespect towards him ever to be pardoned: A shower of stones and arrows interrupted the parley; the Spanish soldiers had ceased for the moment to protect Montezuma with their shields; and he was severely wounded in the head and in two other places. The miserable Monarch was borne away, having received his death-stroke, but whether it came from the wounds themselves, or from the indignity of being thus treated by his people, remains a doubtful point. It seems, however, that, to use some emphatic words which have been employed upon a similar occasion, "He turned his face to the wall and would be troubled no more."

He is wounded.

He dies.

It is remarkable that he did not die a Christian,* and I think this shows that he had more force of mind and purpose than the world has generally been inclined to give him credit for. To read Montezuma's character rightly, at this distance of time, and amidst such a wild per-

* I am not ignorant that it has been asserted that Montezuma received the rite of baptism at the hands of his Christian captors.—See BUSTAMANTE'S notes on CHIMALPAIN'S translation of GOMARA (*Historia de las Conquistas de Hernando Cortés.* CARLOS MARIA DE BUSTAMANTE. Mexico, 1826, page 287). But the objections raised by TORQUEMADA—the silence of some of the best authorities, such as OVIEDO, IXTLILXOCHITL, *Histoire des Chichimèques,* and of CORTES himself; and, on the other hand, the distinctly opposing testimony of BERNAL DIAZ (see cap. 127), and the statement of HERRERA, who asserts that Montezuma, at the hour of his death, refused to quit the religion of his fathers ("No se queria apartar de la Religion de sus Padres"—*Hist. de las Indias,* dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 10), convince me that no such baptism took place.

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plexity of facts, would be very difficult, and is not very important. But one thing, I think, is discernible, and that is, that his manners were very gracious and graceful. I dwell upon this, because, I conceive, it was a characteristic of the race; and no one will estimate this characteristic lightly, who has observed how very rare, even in the centres of civilized life, it is to find people of fine manners, so that in great capitals but very few persons can be pointed out, who are at all transcendant in this respect. A cynical observer of modern times would probably contend that there are not now as many persons of highly polished manners in that great continent of America, as there were in the year of our Lord, 1520. The gracious delight which Montezuma had in giving was particularly noticeable;* and the impression which he made upon Bernal Diaz may be seen in the narrative of this simple soldier, who never speaks of him otherwise than as "the great Montezuma," and, upon the occasion of his death, remarks that some of the Spanish soldiers who had known him mourned for him, as if he had been a father, "and no wonder," he adds, "seeing that he was so good."† Cortes sent out the body

His grand politeness.

* "Fué dadivoso, i mui franco con Españoles, i creo que tambien con los suios, cá si fuera Arte, y no por Natura, facilmente se le conociera al dár en el semblante, que los que dan de mala gana, mucho descubren el caraçon."—Gomara, *Cronica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 107. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

† "É hombres huvo entre nosotros de los que le conociamos y tratavamos, que tan llorado fué, como si fuera nuestro padre: y no nos hemos de maravillar dello, viendo que tan bueno era."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 126.

to the new King, and Montezuma was mourned over by the Spaniards, to whom he had always been gracious, and probably by his own people; but little could be learnt of what the Mexicans thought, or did, upon the occasion, by the Spaniards, who only saw that Montezuma's death made no difference in the fierceness of the enemy's attack.

Desperate resolve of the Mexicans.

On the day in which Montezuma had addressed the people, Cortes had a conference with some of the opposing chiefs, who declared that the only basis on which they would treat, was that the Spaniards should quit the city; otherwise, they said, they themselves would all have to die, or to put an end to the Spaniards. Such a basis of peace not being at all acceptable to Cortes, he next tried the effect of the *mantas*. These were advanced against the walls of some of the *azoteas*, being well supported from behind by four cannon, by a party of Spanish cross-bowmen and common soldiers, and by three thousand of the Tlascalan allies. But all their efforts were without avail. As for the cavalry, it could do nothing, as the horses could not keep their footing for a moment on the polished tesselated pavement. Indeed, the numbers and the vigour of the enemy were so great, that the Spaniards could not gain a single step; on the contrary, they were obliged to give way, and the Indians occupied the square of the temple. There, five hundred of the principal persons, as they appeared to Cortes, posted themselves on the summit of the great temple: they were well-

A body of Mexicans occupy the summit of the great temple.

provisioned; and, being close to the fortress, could do it much harm. The Spaniards made two or three attempts to take this position, but were driven back each time, and some were wounded. Cortes saw that it would be necessary for him to make the attempt in person; and, accordingly, though wounded, he resolved to do so. He had his shield bound on to his arm (the wound being in the left hand), and having placed some of his troops at the base of the temple, he commenced the difficult ascent. The Spaniards succeeded in gaining the summit, and, after a terrible combat, in dislodging the Mexicans from that height, and driving them down upon the lower terraces. Then might be seen, flitting about the contest, like some obscene and hideous birds of prey, the priests of the temple, with their long black veils streaming in the wind,—the blood flowing from their clotted hair and lacerated ears, as on a day of sacrifice,—now transported by wrath at the desecration of their shrines, now animated by the expectation of fresh victims, and throughout supported in their ecstasy by the hope of some great manifestation on the part of their false deities. But the Mexican god of war could not, even at this critical period of his and their existence, instruct his worshippers how to hurl down, at the right inclination, the large beams which they had carried up to the temple, and which, if justly aimed, would have fatally disconcerted the Spanish attack. The fight, which must have been one of the most picturesque on record, lasted three

Cortes dislodges the enemy from the temple.

hours; and, to use the words of BERNAL DIAZ, "Cortes there showed himself to be a very valiant man, as he always was."* The Spaniards lost forty men; but they succeeded in putting every one of the Mexicans to the sword. We learn from the account of this battle something of the form of the temple. It appears that there were three or four terraces of some width, besides the main platform at the top.† Some of the Mexicans were hurled from the top of the temple to the bottom; others, again, as above described, were dislodged, and made a second stand upon one of these terraces. The difficulty of gaining the little tower, where the idols stood, was so great, that Cortes looks

Form of the temple.

* "Aquí se mostró Cortés mui varon, como siempre lo fué." —BERNAL DIAZ, cap. 126. DE SOLIS says that two patriotic Mexicans approached Cortes in an attitude of supplication, and then sprung upon him, and endeavoured to throw themselves downwards from the temple with him; but that Cortes burst from them and saved himself, while they were dashed to pieces on the pavement of the court-yard below. Upon this story CLAVIGERO remarks, "The very humane gentlemen Raynal and Robertson, moved to pity, as it appears, by the peril of Cortes (*Gli umanissimi Signori Raynal, e Robertson mossi a pietà, per quanto appare, pel pericolo de Cortès*) have provided some kind of unknown battlements and iron rails, by which he saved himself until he got clear of the Mexicans; but neither did the Mexicans ever make iron rails, nor had that temple any battlements. It is wonderful that these authors, so incredulous concerning what is attested by the Spanish and Indian writers, should yet believe what is neither to be found among the ancient authors, nor probable in itself." —See CLAVIGERO, *Storia Antica del Messico*, tom. 3, lib. 9, p. 128; see also the English Translation, vol. 2, p. 108.

† "Arriba peleámos con ellos tanto, que les fué forzado saltar de ella abajo á unas azoteas, que tenia al derredor, tan anchas como un paso. E de estas tenia la dicha Torre, tres, ó quatro, tan altas la una de la otra como tres estados."—LORENZANA, p. 138.

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upon his success as owing to a special interposition of Providence.* The idols, it appears, had been reinstated; but the triumph of Huitzilopochtli and Tezcatlipuk was but of short duration; for Cortes set fire to these hideous images, and to the tower in which they had their abode. Certainly, the great temple was a place of ill-omen for the Mexicans to fight upon, and the blood of slaughtered thousands might well rise up to testify against them on that day.

Cortes sets fire to the idols.

This fight in the temple gave a momentary brightness to the arms of the Spaniards, and afforded Cortes an opportunity to resume negociations. But the determination of the Mexicans was fixed and complete. It was in vain that the Spanish General pressed them to consider the havoc which he daily made amongst their citizens, and the injury he was doing to their beautiful city. They replied, that they were well aware of the mischief which the Spaniards were doing, and of the slaughter they were causing amongst the Mexican people; but, nevertheless, they were determined that they would all perish, if that were needful, to gain their point of destroying the Spaniards. They bade Cortes look at the streets, the squares, and the terraces, covered with people; and then, in a business-like and calculating manner, they told

Determination of the Mexicans.

* "Y crea Vuestra Sacra Magestad, que fué tanto ganalles esta Torre, que si Dios no les quebrara las alas, bastaban veinte de ellos para resistir la subida á mil Hombres, como quiera que pelearon muy valientemente, hasta que murieron." — LORENZANA, p. 139.

him that if twenty-five thousand of them were to die for each Spaniard, still the Spaniards would perish first.* They urged triumphantly that all the causeways were destroyed, and that the Spaniards had few provisions left, and very little water, so that they would die of hunger and thirst, if from nothing else. "In truth," says Cortes, "they had much reason in what they said, for if we had no other enemy to fight against but hunger, it was sufficient to destroy us all in a short time."

They calculate the relative value of a Spaniard's life.

The conference ended in a discouraging manner for the Spaniards; but Cortes revived the spirits of himself and his men by a sally which he made at nightfall, and in which the Spaniards succeeded in burning more than three hundred houses. This, however, did but little good, as it only rendered three hundred families desperate.

The Mexicans had exaggerated the damage, when they spoke of all the causeways being destroyed. The one to Tlacuba, though much injured, still remained. Indeed, in the course of the next day, when Cortes turned his whole attention in that direction, securing the bridges, and filling up the gaps that had been made, destroying the barricades, and burning the houses and towers which commanded this causeway, he succeeded in making it passable for that day; and with some of his men, absolutely did reach

* "Que á morir veinte y cinco mil de ellos, y uno de los nuestros, nos acabariamos nosotros primero." — Lorenzana, p. 139.

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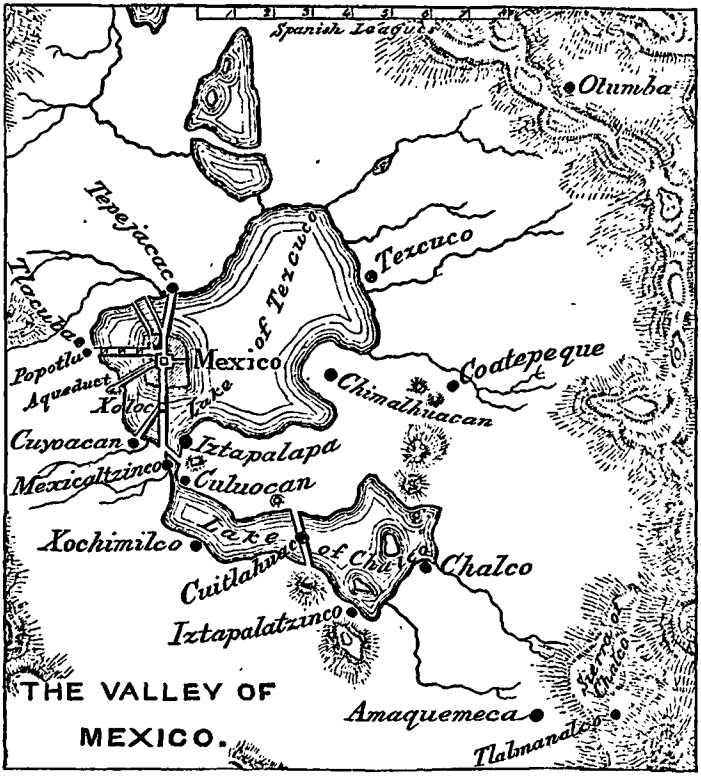
the terra-firma, in a charge that they made upon the enemy. But the Mexicans redoubling their efforts, Cortes with difficulty regained the fortress; and, at the end of a day of continued fighting,



the Mexicans claimed the victory, and had made themselves masters of several of the bridges.

It generally requires at least as much courage to retreat as to advance. Indeed, few men have the courage and the ready wisdom to retreat in time. But Cortes, once convinced that his position in Mexico was no longer tenable, wasted no

time or energy in parleying with danger. Terror had lost its influence with the Mexicans, and superior strategy was of little avail against such overpowering numbers. Moreover, strategy, when there is hunger in the camp, is no longer uncontrolled in its movements, and is subject to other laws than those of the science which ought to guide it.

Cortes resolves to quit Mexico.

Cortes resolved to quit the city that night. His men had long wished for him to come to this conclusion; and an astrologer of the name of Botello, of whom it was said that he had a familiar spirit, had discovered by his divinations, and declared four nights before, that if they did not depart on that very night, no one of them would escape alive.

Preparations for departure.

Preparations for departure were instantly commenced. A pontoon was constructed of wood, and intrusted to fifty Spanish soldiers and four hundred Tlascalans, the Spanish soldiers being all chosen men, bound by an oath to die rather than desert their pontoon. To convey the artillery, fifty Spanish soldiers and two hundred and fifty Tlascalans were appointed, while the prisoners, together with that important person, Donna Marina, were intrusted to an escort of three hundred Tlascalans and thirty Spanish soldiers.

The order of departure.

The main divisions of the army were arranged as follows. The brave Sandoval was intrusted with the vanguard. The baggage, the prisoners, and the artillery were to come next. Pedro de Alvarado was to bring up the rear-guard, con-

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sisting in great part of the troops of Narvaez. Cortes, with a few horsemen and one hundred foot soldiers, was to assist in the passage of the centre of the army (of the weaker part in fact), and was to be at hand wherever the pressure of the battle might be greatest. The sick and the wounded were not forgotten: they were to be taken upon the cruppers of the horse-soldiers. Having made these dispositions, Cortes then brought out the gold. Seven wounded horses, one mare belonging to Cortes, and eighty Tlascalans, were laden with the King's fifths, or with what could be carried of them. After this had been done, Cortes bade the soldiers take what they liked of the rest of the gold; and woe to him who encumbered himself with any! for, we are told, it was their destruction (*literally*, their "knife"),* and that he who took least gold, came best out of danger on this disastrous night.

The retreat commenced: the first bridge.

A little before midnight the stealthy march began. The Spaniards succeeded in laying down the pontoon over the first bridge-way, and the vanguard with Sandoval passed over; Cortes and his men also passed over; but, while the rest were passing, the Mexicans gave the alarm with loud shouts and blowing of horns. "Tlaltelulco,† Tlaltelulco!" they exclaimed, "come out quickly with your canoes: the *teules* are going,

* "Que los que quisiesen, tomasen del Tesoro que havia, á su voluntad, que fué su cuchillo, porque el que menos tomó, salió mejor del caso." — Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 11.

† Tlaltelulco was the quarter of the town where the market was situated.

cut them off at the bridges." Almost immediately upon this alarm, the lake was covered with canoes. It rained, and the misfortunes of the night commenced by two horses slipping from the pontoon into the water. Then, the Mexicans attacked the pontoon-bearers so furiously, that it was impossible for them to raise it up again. In a very short time the water at that part was full of dead horses, Tlascalan men; Indian women, baggage, artillery, prisoners, and boxes (*petacas*) which, I suppose, supported the pontoon. On every side the most piteous cries were heard, "Help me! I drown!" "Rescue me! they are killing me!" Such vain demands were mingled with prayers to the Virgin Mary and to Saint James. Those that did get up upon the bridge and on the causeway, found bands of Mexican warriors ready to push them down again into the water.

The pontoon lost.

At the second bridge-way a single beam was found, which doubtless had been left for the convenience of the Mexicans themselves. This was useless for the horses; but Cortes diverging, found a shallow place where the water did not reach further than up to the saddle, and by that he and his horsemen passed (as Sandoval must have done before). He contrived, also, to get his foot-soldiers safely to the main-land, though whether they swam or waded, whether they kept the line of the causeway, or diverged into the shallows, it is difficult to determine. Leaving the vanguard and his own division safe on shore, Cortes with a small body of horse and foot, re-

The second bridge.

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turned to give what assistance he could to those who were behind him. All order was now lost; and the retreat was little else than a confused slaughter, although small bodies of the Spaniards still retained sufficient presence of mind to act together, rushing forward, clearing the space about them, making their way at each moment with loss of life, but still some few survivors getting onwards. Few, indeed, of the rear-guard could have escaped. It is told as a wonder of Alvarado, that, coming to the last bridge, he made a leap, which has by many been deemed impossible, and cleared the vast aperture. When Cortes came up to him, he was found accompanied only by seven soldiers, and eight Tlascalans, all covered with blood from their many wounds. They told Cortes that there was no use in going further back, that all who remained alive were there with them. Upon this the General turned; and the small and melancholy band of Spaniards pushed on to Tlacuba, Cortes protecting the rear. It is said that he sat down on a stone in a village called Popotla near Tlacuba, and wept; a rare occurrence, for he was not a man to waste any energy in weeping while aught remained to be done. The country was aroused against them, and they did not rest for the night till they had fortified themselves in a temple on a hill near Tlacuba, where afterwards was built a church dedicated, very appropriately, to Our Lady of Refuge (*á Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*).

The third bridge.

The remains of the army arrive at Tlacuba.

This memorable night has ever been cele-

brated in American history as *la noche triste*. In this flight from Mexico all the artillery was lost, and there perished four hundred and fifty* Spaniards, amongst whom was Velazquez de Leon, one of the principal men in the expedition and a relation of the Governor of Cuba, four thousand of the Indian allies, forty-six horses, and most of the Mexican prisoners, including one son and two daughters of Montezuma, and his nephew the King of Tezcuco. A loss which posterity will ever regret was that of the books and accounts, memorials and writings, of which there were some, it is said, that contained a narrative of all that had happened since Cortes left Cuba.† The wisdom of the astrologer Botello did not save him (but what wise man is ever wise for himself!); and that any Spaniard remained alive seems to infer some negligence on the part of the Mexican conquerors.

Loss of men in the retreat of the *noche triste*.

The error of the Spaniards, if error there were, was in taking only one pontoon.‡ The main error of the Mexicans was in not occupying the ground where the Spaniards would have to land, and in concentrating their forces at the

Error of the Spaniards.

Of the Mexicans.

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* Bernal Diaz estimates the number of Spaniards lost at eight hundred and seventy; Oviedo at eleven hundred and seventy. I have adopted in the text the numbers given by Gomara, but should not be surprised if they were proved to be understated.

† "Los Libros de la Cuenta, y Raçon de la Real Hacienda, y los Memoriales, y Escrituras pertenecientes á todo lo sucedido, desde que Cortés salió de Cuba."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 71.

‡ "Y si como llevaron una puente, fueran tres, pocos se perdieran."—Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, tom. 2, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 11.

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bridges where there was not room for more than a certain number of them to act, and where they incommoded each other. The summary of the retreat I believe to be this: that the passage of the first bridge was successfully made, through means of the pontoon, by a large portion of the most serviceable persons in the little army, but that, even at that first point, there was great loss of life amongst the weaker portion, and of baggage, and artillery: that between the first bridge and the second there was almost a total destruction of the weaker, less mobile, and more laden part of the Spanish force: that, at the second bridge, by means of that beam which was fortunately there, a good number of those who would be called *sueltos*, active and skilful persons, and who were favoured by being in a forward position, contrived to pass; but that neither baggage, artillery, prisoners, nor men laden with bars of gold, ever passed that second fatal aperture: and, for the third, it seems to me that it could have been passed by those only who were able to swim, or who, having by chance diverged into a shallower part, waded through the water, and rejoined the causeway near the main-land. In the annals of retreats there has seldom been one recorded which proved more entirely disastrous. It occurred on the 1st of July, 1520.*

A summary of the retreat.

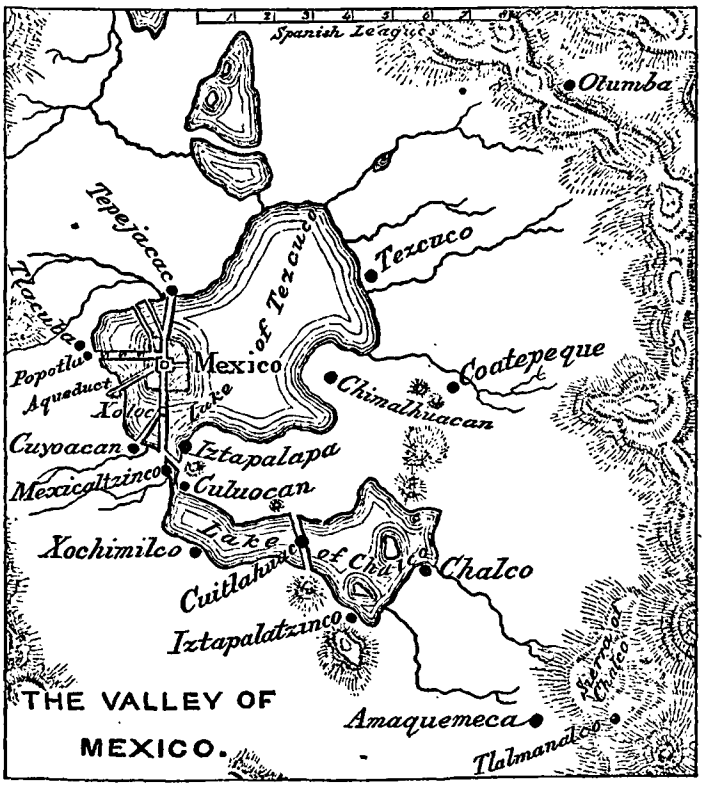
It took place, July, 1520.

From Tlacuba Cortes moved on towards the

* Bernal Diaz says that it occurred on the 10th of July; but this is contradicted by a date which Cortes gives in his letter, when, speaking of the day after the battle of Otumba, he

province of Tlascala, always fighting his way, and always encumbered with enemies. The night before he reached a certain valley, soon to be made celebrated by him, called the valley of Otumba, considering that every day the Spaniards were growing weaker and the enemy be-

Cortes proceeds to Tlascala.



coming bolder and more numerous, he bethought him of a device, or, as he expresses it, the Holy Spirit enlightened him with advice,* in reference

says that it was a Sunday, tho 8th of July. "Que fué Domingo á ocho de Julio."—Lorenzana, p. 149.

* "El Espíritu Santo me alumbró con este aviso."—Lorenzana, p. 148.

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to the manner of carrying the sick and wounded. They had hitherto been carried on horseback behind the fighting men, but he now caused litters to be constructed for them. This, at any moment of danger or difficulty, would give much more freedom of action to his cavalry. The next morning, the Spaniards had not proceeded two leagues before they found themselves surrounded by such a number of Indians that, as Cortes says, neither in front, nor in the rear, nor on the flanks, could any part of the plain be seen which was not covered by these Indians. Cortes and his men thought that this would be the last day of their lives. The battle raged for a long time, and was of that confused character, that fighting, or fleeing, or discerning whether they were victorious or defeated, was almost equally difficult for either party. It was one of those battles not admitting of large manœuvres, and of which each soldier engaged has afterwards a different story to tell. Conspicuous in the ranks of the enemy was their General, with his outspread flag, his rich armour of gold, and his plumes of silver feathers. Towards this glittering centre Cortes and his best captains, after the fight had lasted some time, directed their attack; and Cortes himself bore down the Mexican General to the ground. The Mexicans, seeing their General slain, fled; and in this manner the celebrated battle of Otumba was gained by the Spaniards. The description which Cortes gives of the main incident in it is very characteristic of him, from the

Battle of Otumba.

Death of the Indian General.

modesty and simplicity with which it is given. His own words are these:—"And we went fighting in that toilsome manner a great part of the day, until it pleased God that there was slain a person amongst the enemy who must have been the General; for with his death the battle altogether ceased."

The modesty of Cortes.

After the victory the Spaniards proceeded with much less fear and less harassment, although, to use the graphic expression of Cortes, the enemy still continued biting them (*mordiéndonos*), until they reached a small country house where they encamped for the night. From that spot they could perceive certain sierras in the territory of Tlascala, a most welcome sight to their eyes, although Cortes, who knew mankind well, was thoroughly aware of the difference of reception that they might meet with now that they came, not as prosperous men and conquerors, but as poor men and fugitives. The next day they entered the province of Tlascala, and rested in a Tlascalan town three days. There, the principal Tlascalan Lords came to see them, and, instead of showing any coldness or unkindness, they laboured to console Cortes in his misfortune. "Oh! Malinché, Malinché," they said, "how it grieves us to hear of your misfortunes, and of those of all your brothers, and of the multitude of our own men who have perished with yours. Have we not told you many times, that you should not trust in those Mexican people, for there was no security from one day to another that they would not make war upon you, and you

Speech of the Tlascalan Lords to Cortes, consoling him.

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would not believe us? But now the thing is done, and nothing more remains at present but to refresh you and to cure you. Wherefore, we will go immediately to our city, where you shall be lodged as it may please you." With these words, and words like these, of noble kindness, their good allies brought the Spaniards to the chief city of Tlascala, which they reached about the middle of July, 1520.

The Spaniards kindly received at Tlascala.

CHAPTER IX.

RESOLUTION OF THE TLASCALAN SENATE—CORTES IN TEPEACA—FORMS A GREAT ALLIANCE AGAINST THE MEXICANS—PREPARES TO MARCH AGAINST MEXICO—REVIEWS HIS TROOPS AT TLASCALA.

RETREATING, wounded, despoiled, having lost numbers of his own men, and the greater part of his allied troops, almost any other commander but Cortes would have been thoroughly cast down. Not so, this modern Cæsar, who only meditated to refresh himself by new combats. That section, however, of his men who had been the followers of Narvaez, and probably some of the others, did not share in the ardour of their chief. On the contrary, they counselled an instant march to Vera Cruz, before their present allies, uniting with their enemies, should occupy the passes between the town of Tlascala and the sea. If Cortes had an intention of resuming the war with Mexico, their present repose, they thought, would but fatten them for sacrifice. Such was the common discourse, and such, indeed, were the representations which they made to Cortes himself. Moreover, when he did not give way to their suggestions, they drew up a formal requisition, in which they stated

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their loss of men, their want of horses, weapons, and ammunition, and upon these statements required him to march to Vera Cruz. The reply of Cortés to this requisition has been made for him by two considerable historians;* but as they did not write in concert, the speeches have not the slightest resemblance.† In the one speech, he is made to allude to Xenophon, and to quote "Vegetius *De Re Militari;*" in the other (the chaplain's account), the deeds of Jonathan and David are brought in by way of illustration. Cortes himself, who always speaks simply, tells the Emperor, that, recollecting how fortune favours the brave (*que siempre á los osados ayuda la fortuna*),—a proverb which he acted out so nobly, that of all men of his time he had most right to quote it; and also reflecting that any symptom of pusillanimity would bring down the Indians upon them, both friends and enemies, more quickly than anything else; and also considering, that he and his men were Christians, and that God "would not permit" that they should altogether perish, and that such a great country should be lost,—he determined on no account to descend towards the sea. Accordingly, he told his men that to quit the country would not only be shameful to him, and dangerous to all of them, but also treasonable to the King's service.

Cortes is required to retreat to Vera Cruz.

The view which Cortes took of his situation.

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* Oviedo and Gomara.

† May that man who invented fictitious speech-making in history yet have to listen to innumerable speeches from dull men accustomed to address courts of law, or legislative assemblies! I wish him no further punishment, though he has been a most mischievous person to the human race.

It is clear that Cortes was supported by a considerable section of his own men. Such is the statement of Bernal Diaz; and it is evident to me that this soldier-historian, for one, did not join with those who presented the aforesaid requisition, as, if he had accompanied the malcontents, instead of proving that there were certain gross errors in the statements which Gomara puts into the mouth of Cortes, he would, I think, have asserted that the speech was altogether a fabrication. The truth is, that the men of Narvaez were of a richer class than the men of Cortes, and were much less compromised in his doings. Indeed, they taunted the others by saying that these had nothing but their persons to lose; while they maintained that the desire to command was that which induced Cortes himself to persevere.*

Mexico sends ambassadors to Tlascala.

Meanwhile, as great, if not a greater, danger threatened Cortes from another quarter. The Mexicans sent ambassadors to the government of Tlascala with a present of garments, feathers, and salt. These ambassadors, being admitted into the Tlascalan senate, referred to the identity of lineage, laws, and language between the Mexicans and the Tlascalans; spoke of their ancient enterprizes in arms together, and of a friendship between the two nations which had been broken by a question of religion;† and then said, that it

Speech of the ambassadors.

* "Y mas dezian, que nuestro Cortés, por mandar, y siempre ser señor, y nosotros los que con el passavamos, no tener que perder, sino nuestras personas, assistiamos con él." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 129.

† "Qu'ensuite une question de religion avait altéré leur amitié, et qu'il en était résulté les dis-

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would be well that the present state of hostility should be put an end to, and that the Tlascalans should not be deprived of those productions which abounded in the Mexican Empire. This last argument was an allusion to the commerce in salt, of which the patriotic Tlascalans had long deprived themselves. The Mexican ambassadors added, that, in order that the two nations might come to terms, it would be necessary that these few Christians should be sacrificed, with whom their gods were very angry. Finally, the Mexicans concluded by saying (which was the most effective appeal they could make), that the Spaniards would insult the Tlascalans as they had insulted them.* The senate received the presents, and said that they would consider the matter. The ambassadors having left the Audience Chamber, the debate began. The chief speakers were Maxitcatzin† (sometimes called by the Spaniards Magiscatzin) and Xicotencatl the younger (*el mozo*); the former always friendly to the Spaniards, the latter their determined enemy. It was a great debate, in which much

Speech of the Mexican ambassadors.

cordes qui étaient nées par la suite." — Ixtlilxochitl, *Hist. des Chichimèques*, cap. 90.

This record of a religious difference between the two nations deserves attention from the student of pre-Spanish American history, and might lead to some curious and important discovery.

* "Que los mismos insultos harian con ellos, sino miraban por sí." — Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 75.

† These uncouth Mexican names were, I have no doubt, much softer and more tolerable than they appear. In this name, for instance, the last syllable "tzin," is a title of honour, and that the rest of the name was pronounced much more softly than it was written, may be conjectured from the corruption of the name which appears in Bernal Diaz, namely, "Masse Escaci."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 129.

was to be said on both sides. Honour and faith were with Maxitcatzin, and perhaps even the balance of policy was in his favour; but much was to be said upon the other side, and with all their courtesy, it must not be supposed but that the Tlascalans had felt very deeply the total loss of that part of their army which had accompanied the Spaniards to Mexico, and the disgrace of the flight. Some reproaches, even, had been addressed to the Spaniards upon this point;* though, no doubt, these had been uttered only, or chiefly, by people of the lower classes. Xicotencatl maintained that it would be better to enter into the Mexican confederacy, and to uphold their ancient customs, than to learn the new ones of this stranger people, an indomitable race, who wished to have the command in everything. "Now was the time," he said, "to adopt this counsel, when the Spaniards were routed and dispirited."

Debate in the Tlascalan senate.

It is probable, as often happens in difficult dilemmas, that neither counsel would have been prosperous, or sufficed to save the Tlascalans, for, as the Spanish faction amongst them asserted, the Mexicans would never have forgiven them for having in the first instance received and favoured the Spaniards. Still, however little chance of escape by wisdom there was for the Tlascalans, it is seldom, in this history, that a

* "Decianle algunos, á qué venistes, á comernos nuestra Hacienda? Anda, que bolvistes destroçados de México, hechados como viles Mugeres, y otras cosas á este propósito."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 75.

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more momentous council had been held; for certainly if the Tlascalan senate had gone with Xicotencatl the younger, the Spanish Conquest must have been deferred, and might have taken place under very different auspices. The debate waxed warm; so warm, indeed, that Maxitcatzin struck his opponent, who was precipitated down a flight of stairs, the debate having been held in an oratory. A miraculous turn has been given to the story, such as that a cloud was seen to enter the room and rest upon a cross which was there, and that the members of the council were influenced by this miraculous interposition.* We need not, however, depreciate the generous disposition of the Tlascalans by summoning to its aid any miraculous interference. They admired their allies, the Spaniards; they had fought side by side with them; they were willing to share their reverses, and to throw in their lot with that of these skilful and enduring strangers. In a word, the counsel of Maxitcatzin prevailed, and, though they knew it not, the fate of the Tlascalans was

The Tlascalans resolve to abide by their alliance with the Spaniards.

* "Cette discussion avait lieu dans la salle de prière de Xicotencatl où l'on avait érigé une croix. Tous ceux qui étaient présents virent entrer une nuée qui couvrit la croix, et toute la salle resta dans l'obscurité. Maxizcatzin, voyant ce miracle, sentit augmenter à un tel point le courage et l'ardeur avec lesquels il défendait le parti des chrétiens, qu'il interpella vivement Xicotencatl le jeune, qui soutenait avec chaleur le parti de son père. Ils en vinrent aux mains; Maxizcatzin lui donna un coup de poing si violent qu'il le renversa en bas de l'escalier qui est à l'entrée de la salle. Tous les membres de l'assemblée, témoins d'un si grand miracle, furent ébranlés et adoptèrent l'opinion de Maxizcatzin." — Ixtlilxochitl, *Histoire des Chichimèques*, cap. 90. Ternaux-Compans, *Voyages*.

therein decided also; and their great city, with its numerous population, was to dwindle away under the shade of their engrossing allies, until it should become, as in our time, a petty country town.*

It was, perhaps, from policy, perhaps, from a grand politeness, which is to be noticed amongst these Indians, that Maxitcatzin did not mention to Cortes anything about this Mexican embassy. The intelligence, however, reached his ear, it is said, from other quarters; and, curiously enough, the rival chieftain Xicotencatl, seeing that it was useless to oppose Cortes, came and offered his services to him in an expedition which Cortes now proposed to make against Tepeaca, a country lying southward, the inhabitants of which were inimical to the Tlascalans, and also to Cortes, having intercepted and slain ten or twelve Spaniards who were coming from Vera Cruz to Mexico. These Tepeacans, moreover, were allies of the Mexicans.

Cortes resolves to invade Tepeaca.

* "The ancient numerous population of Tlascala is no longer found within its limits, and perhaps not more than four or five thousand individuals now inhabit it. But the town is, nevertheless, handsome; — its streets are regular; its private houses, town hall, bishop's palace, and principal church, are built in a style of tasteful architecture, while on the remains of the chief Teocalli (temple) of the ancient Tlascalans, a Franciscan convent has been built, which is perhaps one of the earliest ecclesiastical edifices in the Republic. In the town itself and in its vicinity many relics and ruins of the past glory of Tlascala are still found by antiquarians, but they have hitherto been undisturbed by foreign visiters, and remain unnoticed by the natives." — Brantz Mayer's *Mexico, Aztec, Spanish and Republican*, vol. 2, lib. 5, cap. 4. Hartford, U.S., 1852.

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The engaging Cortes proved equally successful with his own men as with the Tlascalans. The men of Narvaez murmured, but they went; and Cortes, on quitting Tlascala, which he did at the end of twenty-two days after his return to that city, found himself at the head of a large army, amounting to no less than one hundred and fifty thousand men. Amongst these the Cholulans were to be found as allies.

The world is too old, and there is too little time now, for listening to a minute account of the fate of any province or nation which has not contrived to make itself known for anything but its disasters. We cannot, therefore, do more than say that Tepeaca was swiftly subdued, that the people in that part of the country where the Spaniards had been intercepted, were made slaves, Cortes alleging that they were cannibals, and also that he wished to terrify the Mexicans, —enouncing at the same time a favourite doctrine of his, namely, that the people were so numerous, that unless a "great and cruel chastisement" were made amongst them, they would never be amended.* He also founded a town called Segura de la Frontera in the district of Tepeaca.

Cruel policy of Cortes.

Segura de la Frontera founded.

For the reason above given, it will be need-

* "Porque demás de haber muerto á los dichos Españoles, y rebeladose contra el Servicio de Vuestra Alteza, comen todos carne humana, por cuya notoriedad no embio á Vuestra Magestad probanza de ello. Y tambien me movió á facer los dichos Esclavos, por poner algun espanto á los de Culúa: y porque tambien hay tanta Gente, que si no ficiesse grande, y cruel castigo en ellos, nunca se emendarían jamás."—Lorenzana, p. 154.

less to enter into all the wars and forays that Cortes undertook at this period. Suffice it to say, that wherever he met the Mexican troops, he routed them, conquering also their allies, and receiving the conquered provinces into the friendship and under the vassalage of the King of Spain. It is observable that the towns and fortresses were well built. Of a town, for instance, called Yzzucán, Cortes says, "It is very well arranged in its streets, and has a hundred temples."* Of Guacachula he says, "It is surrounded by a strong wall twenty feet high, with a battlement two feet and a half high. It had four entrances, so constructed, that the walls overlapped one another."† Again, of the provinces of Zuzula and Tamazula, Cortes mentions, that they were thickly populated, and the houses better built than any that the Spaniards had seen elsewhere in the New World.‡ It is necessary to remark these things, as otherwise the reader might imagine that Mexico, as it was the central point of the Conquest, was the only centre of civilization; whereas, a certain kind of well-being, and some knowledge of the arts of life, were spread over a considerable portion of America,

Successes of Cortes in the provinces of New Spain.

Other fine towns in New Spain besides Mexico.

* "Esta Ciudad de Yzzucán será de hasta tres, ó quatro mil Vecinos, es muy concertada en sus Calles, y Tratos, tenia cien Casas de Mezquitas, y Oratorios muy fuertes con sus Torres: las quales todas se quemaron."—Lorenzana, p. 164.

† "Y hay en cada entrada tres, ó quatro bueltas de la cerca, que encabalga el un lienzo en el otro: y hacia á aquellas bueltas hay tambien encima de la Muralla su petril para pelear."—Lorenzana, p. 162.

‡ "Habia muy grandes Poblaciones, y Casas muy bien obradas, de mejor Cantería, que en ninguna de estas Partes se había visto."—Lorenzana, p. 162.

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and might be traced, indeed, from a point further south than Cusco, in Peru (following the Andes, the spinal column of that great continent), to California.

Great alliance against the Mexicans.

The result of the exertions of Cortes at this period, namely, from July to December in the year 1520, was to form a great defensive and offensive alliance against the Mexicans, and to render an attack upon that country, not merely a splendid and chivalrous attempt, but an enterprize entirely consistent with the rules of that prudence, into which the valour of Cortes was welded as the blade of the sword is to its handle.

This enterprize Cortes had, probably, never abandoned for one single moment. To the Emperor he emphatically says, "My determined resolution was to return upon the men of that great city."* Accordingly, he had not devoted all his energies to gaining or subduing provinces more or less obscure, but had bethought him of what would certainly be requisite in any attack to be made upon Mexico. He had despatched, for instance, four ships (the same that had been sent out under the command of Narvaez to subdue him) to Hispaniola for horses—he wisely puts those animals first—men, arms, and ammunition. Then, with still more forethought, he had given orders for brigantines to be constructed in separate pieces at Tlascala, and over

Cortes orders brigantines to be constructed at Tlascala.

* "Mi determinada voluntad era, rebolver sobre los de aquella gran Ciudad."—Lorenzana, p. 178.

this work he had placed a skilful artificer, named Martin Lopez. He had written to the King, detailing the events which had befallen him, and the plans which he cherished; and, in a word, he had neglected nothing which would conduce to the success of his great undertaking.

The Mexicans not inactive.

It remains to be seen, what, in the meanwhile, the Mexicans, who also were not the men to fold their arms while they were on the eve of battle, had done on their side to meet their vigorous and determined enemy. They, too, had sought to make and to strengthen alliances; and their diplomatic efforts had not been so unsuccessful in other places as they had proved in Tlascala. They had sought to secure their tributaries, not by harshness, but by the remission of one year's tribute, on condition that they should wage unceasing war against the Spaniards. In their own vicinity, the Mexicans prepared walls, entrenchments, and fosses; and they fabricated a new kind of arms,—long lances, especially destined to repel the cavalry of their opponents.

Discord and pestilence in Mexico.

It had not been permitted to the Mexicans to devote their time and energies to the future alone. Already, they had had much to contend against, for even when they had got rid of Cortes and his men, they had still two terrible enemies within their city, civil discord and contagious disorder. We learn from Indian authorities,* that imme-

* "Dícese en un Memorial, que dexó escrito el Indio, que se halló en la Conquista, (que despues de Christiano aprendió á Leer, y Escrivir, el qual tengo en mi poder) que luego que los Españo-

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diately after the Spaniards had fled from Mexico, a great contention arose between those Mexicans who had at all befriended the Spaniards, and the rest of the townsmen. In the combats which then took place, two of Montezuma's sons perished.*

In the meanwhile, Cortes, having subdued the provinces adjacent to La Segura, was willing to allow some of the men of Narvaez to return to Cuba, on the ground, as he informed his own partizans, "that it was better to be alone than ill-accompanied."† Previously, however, to their departure, a division was made of that part of the spoil which consisted of slaves; and the proceedings in this matter deserve special attention. These slaves were first collected together, and then branded with the letter "G," which signified *guerra*, (war). A fifth was taken for the King; then, another fifth for Cortes; and the rest were divided amongst the men. We naturally picture to our minds, when reading of slaves of war, that they were strong men, who having come out to fight, had been conquered by stronger or more valiant men, and that the penalty of

A division of slaves amongst the Spaniards.

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les salieron de la Ciudad, huvo diferencias grandes entre los Mexicanos." — Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 73.

* This is confirmed, incidentally, to a certain extent, in the conversation which Montezuma's son-in-law, Johan Cano, had with Oviedo (see *Hist. de las Indias*, lib. 33, cap. 54, p. 549), though Cano throws the blame upon the new Monarch of having ordered the death of one of Montezuma's sons.

† "Que valia mas estar solos, que mal acompañados."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 136.

defeat was servitude,—a transaction which does not shock us much, especially in an age, comparatively speaking, barbarous. But, in this case, and, doubtless, in many others, we should have been much astonished if the slaves had been paraded before us, seeing that they consisted of boys, girls, and young women, for the Spanish soldiers would not make slaves of the men, because they were so troublesome to guard; and, besides, the Spaniards had already, in their Tlascalan friends, men who were ready to do any hard work for them.*

The age and sex of the slaves.

The Spanish soldiers were very much dissatisfied with the mode of division adopted by Cortes. They had brought together to the marking-house their private spoil of human beings; they had even begun to civilize their female captives by clothing them;† and now, after the King and Cortes, and, probably, the other great officers, had taken their share of the spoil, there were no women left but those who were feeble and aged (*davan nos las viejas y ruinas*). The soldiers were very angry. "Were there two kings in the land?" they exclaimed. When these murmurings reached Cortes, he endeavoured to appease the men, addressing them mildly, and swearing by his conscience (a favourite oath of his),

The Spanish soldiers murmur.

* "Todos ocurrimos con todas las Indias muchachas, y muchachos que aviamos avido, que de hombre de edad no nos curavamos dellos, que eran malos de guardar, y no aviamos menester su servicio, teniendo á nuestros amigos los Tlascaltecas."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 135.

† "Les avian dado enaguas, y camisas." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 135.

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that, henceforth, the slaves should be sold by auction.

Cortes quits La Segura, Dec. 1520.

These important affairs having been settled, Cortes quitted La Segura in the middle of December, 1520, to return to Tlascala. On his road, he stopped at Cholula, where the people much desired his arrival, as many of their chiefs were dead, and they wished him to nominate others in their place, which he consented to do.

The small-pox in New Spain: its ravages.

This transaction is notable, as it shows in what high esteem Cortes was held by the natives; but it is also far more notable, on account of the disease of which these chiefs had perished. A black man in the troop of Narvaez had fallen ill of the small-pox, and from him the infection rapidly spread throughout New Spain, and became an important element in the subjugation of the country. It has been maintained, and with some likelihood, that this was the first introduction of that terrible disease into the Continent of America, and that the natives, being unaccustomed to deal with it, and resorting to bathing as a means of cure, perished in great numbers. There is also another theory which has been maintained in modern times, and which would account for the fatality of this disease amongst the Indians, whether it were newly introduced or not. This theory is, that the diseases of a strong people have a strength which cannot be fought against by a weaker people. Had the small-pox been bred amongst the Indians themselves, they would, it is contended, have been able to make a better resistance to it; but

A question for physiologists.

coming from the Spaniards through this negro (also of a stronger race than the Indians), the new recipients were not able to make head against it. However this may be (and such questions are very interesting for the physiologist), it is certain that the arrival of Narvaez and his men, affording at first a bright gleam of hope to the Mexicans, was deeply injurious to them in three ways: in the generation of this fatal disease; in the addition made to the forces of Cortes; and in his compelled absence from Mexico, at a most critical period, when the hopes of the Mexicans and the cruel folly of Alvarado led to that outbreak which was the distinct and direct cause of the future disasters of that kingdom.

The arrival of Narvaez: how it proved ruinous to the Mexicans.

From Cholula Cortes moved on to his friendly Tlascalans, amongst whom he was received with every demonstration of joy,—with triumphal arches, dances, songs, and waving of banners. But there was sad news for him in the death, by the prevalent disease, of his faithful friend and adherent, Maxitcatzin. Cortes put on mourning for this Chief, and, at the request of the State, appointed his son, a youth of twelve or thirteen years of age, to succeed him. He also made the boy a knight, and had him baptized, naming him "Don Juan Maxitcatzin."

Cortes at Tlascala again.

Cortes appoints a successor to Maxitcatzin.

The day after Christmas Day (the 26th of December, 1520), Cortes reviewed his troops, and found that they consisted of forty horsemen and five hundred and fifty foot soldiers, eighty of whom were either cross-bowmen or musketeers. He

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had also eight or nine cannon, but very little powder. He formed his horsemen into four divisions, and his foot-soldiers into nine. He then addressed them saying, that they knew how they and he, to serve His Sacred Majesty, the Emperor, had made a settlement in that country, and how the inhabitants of it had acknowledged their vassalage to His Majesty, continuing to act for some time as such vassals, receiving good offices from the Spaniards, and returning such offices to them. How, without any cause (such are his words, and we may well wonder what had become of that conscience which he was wont to swear by, when he uttered them), the inhabitants of Mexico and of all the provinces subject to them, had not only rebelled against His Majesty, but had killed many friends and relations of the Spaniards there present, and had driven them out of the land. He then passed to the main point of his discourse,—namely, that the Spaniards should return upon their former steps and regain that which they had lost. He advanced the following reasons for the prosecution of the war with Mexico; first, that it was a war for the furtherance of the Faith, and against a barbarous nation; secondly, that it was for the service of His Majesty; thirdly, for the security of their own lives: and then he brought forward as a topic, not so much in the way of reason as of encouragement, the alliances which the Spaniards had secured in aid of this their great enterprize. He afterwards told them that he had made certain

Speech of Cortes to his troops.

That they should reconquer Mexico.

ordinances for the government of the army, which he begged them carefully to observe.*

His men assent.

He received a suitable reply from his men, who declared that they were ready to die for the Faith, and for the service of His Majesty; that they would recover what was lost, and take vengeance for the "treason" which the Mexicans and their allies had committed against them.

The ordinances were proclaimed by sound of trumpet, and the Spaniards returned to their quarters.

Review of the Tlascalan troops.

The next day the Tlascalans had their review, and, as these were the allies whom Cortes greatly relied upon, it will be well to give an account of the review, especially as it comes to us on the authority of an historian, who had access to the papers of the Spanish officer intrusted with all the arrangements connected with these allies.

First of all came the military musicians: then the four Lords of the four quarters of the city, magnificently arrayed after their fashion. They were adorned with a rich mass of plumage†

* "Que ninguno blasfemase el Santo Nombre de Dios.

"Que no riñese un Español con otro.

"Que no jugase Armas, ni Caballo.

"Que no forçasen Mugeres.

"Que nadie tomase Ropa, ni captivase Indios, ni hiciese correrías, ni saquease sin licencia suia, í acuerdo del Cabildo.

"Que no injuriasen á los Indios de Guerra Amigos, ni diesen á los de carga."—Gomara, *Crónica de la Nueva-España*, cap. 119. Barcia, *Historiadores*, tom. 2.

† Those who are familiar with engravings representing the ruins of the ancient American temples will have no difficulty in recognizing this head-dress. It furnishes another proof that these temples were built by men of this race.

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which rose from their shoulders a yard in height, and towered above their heads; precious stones hung from their ears and from their thick lips; their hair was bound by a band of gold or silver; on their feet there were splendid *cotaras*.

Review of the Tlascalan troops.

Behind these chiefs came four pages bearing their bows and arrows.* They themselves carried swords (*macanas*)† and shields. Then came four standard-bearers, carrying the standards of each seignory, which had their arms depicted upon them. Then came sixty thousand bowmen, passing in files of twenty, the standards emblazoned with the arms of the captain of each company appearing at intervals. As the standard-bearers approached the Spanish General, they lowered their standards; whereupon he rose and took off his fur cap. The whole company, then, in a graceful manner, bowed, and shot their arrows into the air. Then came forty thousand shield-bearers (*rondeleros*), but it is not mentioned what arms for offence they carried; and, lastly, ten thousand pikemen.

Cortes addressed the Tlascalan Chiefs very skilfully, telling them that he was going to take his departure the next day, to enter into the territory of their common enemy, the Mexicans;

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* "Saliéndoles de las Espaldas, una Vara en alto, sobre la Cabeça, mui ricos Plumages, encaxadas Piedras ricas, en los Agujeros de las Orejas, y beços, y el Cabello tomado con una Vanda de Oro, ó Plata, en los Piés, ricas Cotaras, tras ellos quatro Pages, con sus Arcos, y Flechas." — Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 81.

† These swords were made of wood, but probably had sharp facets made of flint or of obsidian, and might be made to inflict a very ugly wound.

but that the city of Mexico could not be taken without the aid of those brigantines which were being built at Tlascala. He, therefore, begged his allies to furnish the Spaniards left to build these vessels with all the means of doing so, and to treat them well, as they always had done, in order that the vessels might be ready, when, if God should give him the victory, he should send from the city of Tezcuco for them. The Tlascalans replied with enthusiasm that they would die where he died, so that they might revenge themselves upon the men of Mexico, their principal enemies; that, with regard to the brigantines, they would not only do what he told them, but when the vessels were finished, they would convey them to Mexico, and that then the whole Tlascalan force would accompany him to the war.

Cortes confides his shipwrights to the good offices of the Tlascalans.

CHAPTER X.

THE MARCH TO TEZCUCO—SURPRIZES IZTAPALAPA—EXPEDITION ROUND THE GREAT LAKE—FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIEGE OF MEXICO.

Cortes starts from Tlascala for the siege of Mexico.

HAVING so far prospered in all that he had planned against the devoted city of Mexico, Cortes started from Tlascala on the 28th of December, the Feast of the Innocents. There were three ways leading to Tezcuco; Cortes chose the most difficult one, thinking wisely that it would be the least protected. Ten thousand Tlascalans accompanied him. He met with very little opposition, and with none that needs recounting, on the way. When he approached the spot from which the whole province of Mexico could be seen, Cortes bade his men give thanks to God for having brought them so far in safety. The army regarded the scene with a mixture of pleasure and sorrow: pleasure, from the hope they had of future conquest; sorrow, from the losses which that view brought back to their minds; and they all promised one another not to quit the country, but to conquer or die. After they had expressed that determination, they went on as gaily

as if they were going to a festival.* That night the Spaniards halted at Coatepeque, a city subject to Tezcuco, and three leagues distant from it. The Spaniards found the place deserted; and as Cortes knew that the province belonging to Tezcuco was very populous, so that, as he remarks, it could furnish more than one hundred and fifty thousand warriors, he was very watchful that night. Nothing, however, happened; and, the next day, being the last of December, they resumed their march in considerable perplexity as to what were the intentions of the Tezcucans. They had hardly left their quarters before they met four Indian Chiefs, one of whom Cortes recognized as an acquaintance, bearing a rod with a small flag of gold on it, a signal of peace, "which God knows," he adds, "how much we desired." The Chiefs, who came on the part of the King of Tezcuco, made excuses for the injuries which Cortes had received on a former occasion, and said that their King begged that Cortes would do no damage to their country, assuring him that they wished to be vassals to the King of Spain. After some further conference, they asked him whether he was going to the city that day, or whether he would take up his quarters in one or other of those towns which were suburbs† to Tezcuco.

Embassage to Cortes from the King of Tezcuco.

* "Y aunque obimos mucho placer en las ver, considerando el daño pasado, que en ellas habiamos recibido, representósenos alguna tristeza por ello, y prometimos todos de nunca de ella salir, sin Victoria, ó dejar allí las vidas. Y con esta determinacion ibamos todos tan alegres, como si fueramos á cosa de mucho placer."—Lorenzana, p. 188.

† This shows the prosperity of the district, and is an impor-

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These suburbs extended for a league and a half, with houses all the way along.* Cortes replied that he meant to reach Tezcuco that day, whereupon the Chiefs said that they would go forward and prepare the lodgings of the Spaniards. That evening, New Year's Eve, Cortes entered Tezcuco, and took up his quarters in the Palace of the King's late father, giving notice immediately, by a herald, that no Spaniard should quit the building without his leave. This he did to reassure the people, for he had noticed that not a tenth part of the usual population was visible, and that he could see no women or children, which was a bad sign. Some Spaniards having ascended the terraced tops of the building, which commanded the adjacent country, perceived that the inhabitants were flying from it, some betaking themselves with their goods to canoes upon the lake, and others hurrying off to the neighbouring sierras. Cortes immediately gave orders to stop their flight, but, as night now came quickly on, the pursuit was of no use. The King, whom Cortes says that he desired to have in his hands, "as he desired salvation," together with many of the principal men, was amongst the fugitives who had gone to the city of Mexico. It was in the hope of detaining Cortes and preventing his entering the city as an enemy, that the messengers from Tezcuco had gone to meet him and parley with

Cortes enters Tezcuco.

The Tezcucans desert their city.

tant indication of the peace which it must have enjoyed.

* "Que son como Arrabales de la dicha Ciudad, las quales se dicen Coatinchan, y Guaxuta, que están á una legua, y media de ella, y siempre va todo poblado."—Lorenzana, p. 190.

him in the morning. The chiefs of the neighbouring suburbs, or towns as they may more properly be called, did not follow the example of the King of the Tezcucans in his flight to Mexico, but after a few days returned and made peace with Cortes. The Mexicans, hearing this, sent an angry message to them, assuring them at the same time that, if they had made peace with Cortes in order to save their lands, they might enjoy other and better lands if they would come to Mexico. This message had no effect, and the chiefs delivered the messengers into the hands of Cortes, who availed himself of the opportunity to send an offer of peace by them to the authorities at Mexico. He assured them that he did not desire war, although he had much cause for offence; but that he wished to be their friend, as he had been of yore. He added, they well knew that those who had been chiefly concerned in the former war with him were dead (the small-pox had been busy at Mexico, and had carried off the King); "wherefore," he said, "let the past be past, and do not give me occasion to destroy your lands and cities, which I should much regret." This good message led to no result, but the alliance with the neighbouring chiefs was cemented (Cortes seems to have had a genius for making alliances), "and," he adds, as if he were already a vice-roy, "in the name of Your Majesty, I pardoned them their past errors, and so they remained content."

The neighbouring chiefs make peace with Cortes.

He sends a message of peace to Mexico.

The Spanish General stayed for seven or eight

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days at Tezcuco, doing nothing but fortifying his quarters, and when he had done that, he sallied forth with a portion of his forces to make an attack upon the beautiful town of Iztapalapa.

Prepares to make an attack upon Iztapalapa.

Iztapalapa was, comparatively speaking, a small place, of which about two thirds were situated absolutely in the water. Cortes had an especial grudge against this town, because it had belonged to the late King, that brother of Montezuma who had been a principal agent in the events which led to the Spaniards being driven out of the city. He was the person who was sent out by Cortes to order the market to be resumed, and who had thereupon been adopted as the leader of the insurgents.

Cortes did not enter the town without a vigorous resistance on the part of some troops who were posted at two leagues distance from it, but they were not able to withstand him. About two thirds of a league before entering the town, he found that a large sluice-gate had been broken up, the position of which was between the Salt Lake and the Fresh-water Lake. The Spaniards thought little of this circumstance, but pushed on with all the "covetousness of victory," routed the inhabitants who made a stand in their town, and killed more than six thousand of them, men, women, and children, in which sad slaughter the Indian allies took a prominent part. When night came on, Cortes recalled his men from their work of plunder and destruction, and then finished by setting fire to some houses. While these were burning, it appears, says Cortes, that "Our Lord

inspired me with the thought, and brought to my memory this sluice-gate which I had seen broken in the morning."* The great danger he was in struck him in a moment. He instantly gave orders for retreat. It was nine o'clock before he reached the spot of greatest inundation, which I think must have been between that hill which stood over the town and the short causeway connecting Iztapalapa with the main-land. Here Cortes found the water rushing in with great force. The Spaniards bounded across the dangerous pass (*pasamos á volapie*); but some of the Indian allies, not so agile or more encumbered, were drowned; and all the spoil was lost. If they had stopped for three hours more, or if the moon, always a favourer of the romantic Cortes, had not shone forth most opportunely on that night,† none of them would have escaped alive. When day dawned, the height of one lake was the same as the height of the other; and the Salt Lake was covered with canoes, containing Mexican soldiers, who had hoped to find the Spaniards cut off in their retreat, and surrounded by water. Cortes withdrew his men in safety to Tezcuco, having escaped one of the many great dangers of his life. Had any other of the Spanish commanders been the leader of that expedition, it would probably have perished. If

His great danger at that town.

* This narrative only becomes intelligible on the supposition that Cortes entered Iztapalapa on the south side (as he had done before on his first entry into Mexico), and not on the Tezcucan side.

† See Veytia, *Hist. Antigua de Méjico*, tom. 3, Apendice, cap. 16. Mejico, 1836.

valour be the sword, a keen appreciation of danger (often possessed in the highest degree by those who bear themselves best when in danger) is the shield of a great general, or, indeed, of any one who has to guide and to command.

After the return of Cortes to Tezcuco, the people of Otumba, who had already felt the weight of the Spanish General's hand, sent to seek his alliance, and were received as faithful vassals of the King of Spain.

The next enterprize which Cortes undertook, was one of great importance, for its drift was to secure a free communication between his present position at Tezcuco and his friendly town of Tlascala, and also his own colony at Vera Cruz. For this purpose he sent the Alguazil Mayor, Gonzalo de Sandoval, to the town and province of Chalco. A battle took place; Sandoval was victorious; and two sons of the Lord of Chalco came to Tezcuco to make friends with Cortes. These Princes had always been friendly to him, but had hitherto been under the control of the Mexicans. They required a safe-guard for returning, and were accordingly placed under the escort of Sandoval, who was ordered, after seeing them in safety, to go on to Tlascala, and to bring back with him some Spaniards who had been left there, and a certain younger brother of the King of Tezcuco. This Prince had been one of the prisoners of Cortes before the retreat from Mexico, and being young, was easily indoctrinated with the Spanish modes of thought, and had received

Battle in the province of Chalco.

Cortes appoints a king of Tezcuco.

in baptism the name of Fernando. When this youth was brought to Tezcuco by Sandoval, Cortes gave him the kingdom of his forefathers. This, as we shall hereafter see, was a most politic stroke, and it was of immediate service to the Spanish cause. The Tezcucans, finding a member of their own royal family placed upon the vacant throne, began to bethink themselves of returning to their homes. Political refugees seldom meet with the good reception they expect, and to which they think their sufferings and their sacrifices entitle them. However that may be, from the time of Don Fernando's accession, the town began to be repeopled by its former inhabitants, and to look like itself again.

Since his arrival at Tezcuco, Cortes had been continuously successful in attracting to his banner new allies amongst the Indians. He was now to hear of good news from Spain. A youth of his household made his way across the country, knowing the delight his master would receive from the intelligence (in the words of Cortes, "that nothing in the world would give him greater pleasure"), to inform him that a ship had arrived at Vera Cruz, bringing, besides the mariners, thirty or forty Spaniards, eight horses, with some cross-bows, muskets, and gunpowder. These seem but small reinforcements to make glad the heart of a man about to attempt the conquest of a great and populous country. Cortes, however, had men enough in his Indian allies to form the gross material of an army. But each Spaniard was as good as an officer; and the value of horses, guns,

and powder, against an enemy who possessed none of these things, was incalculable.

The demands made upon Cortes in consequence of his Indian alliances were very great, and at times very embarrassing. It was not to be expected that the advantage of such alliances could be all on one side; and on the very day that Cortes received the news of the arrival of reinforcements from Spain, he had an embassage from the Chalcans, beseeching assistance against the Mexicans, who were coming upon them, they said, with great power. The remarks of Cortes upon this occasion are very notable, and furnish an explanation of much of his future conduct. In a letter to the King, he says, "I certify to Your Majesty, as I have done before, that, beyond our own labours and necessities, the greatest distress which I had, was in not being able to aid and succour our Indian allies, who, for being vassals of Your Majesty, were harassed and molested by the Mexicans."* The difficulty of difficulties in writing history, or reading it, is to appreciate the habitual current of ideas, the basis of thought, often so strangely opposed to our own, which belonged to the generation of which we read or write. It seems a mockery to us in the present age to talk of these Indian provinces as in a state of vassalage to the King of

The Chalcans ask for assistance from Cortes.

* "Y certifico á Vuestra Majestad, que como en la otra Relacian escribí, allende de nuestro trabajo, y necesidad, la mayor fatiga, que tenia era, no poder ayudar, y socorrer á los Indios nuestros Amigos, que por ser Vasallos de Vuestra Majestad, eran molestados, y trabajados de los de Culúa."—Lorenzana, p. 204.

Spain; but evidently Cortes and the Spaniards of his time held very different notions on this subject. Cortes thought that the men who had once become vassals of the King of Spain, had not only duties to perform, which he was very rigorous in exacting, but also that they had distinct claims upon him as the King's Lieutenant in those parts, an office into which he had inducted himself. On the present occasion, therefore, he was greatly perplexed by the demand of the Chalcans, for he could not spare his own men, being about to send a detachment of them under Sandoval to escort the Tlascalans who were to bring him the wrought materials of the brigantines.

His motive for granting it.

He resolved, however, to aid the Chalcans by claiming assistance for them from the neighbouring provinces, which were in his alliance. Accordingly, he was about to furnish them with a letter which, though they could not read nor comprehend it, was always taken as a sort of voucher, when it fortunately happened that before the Chalcan embassage departed, there arrived, from the provinces friendly to Cortes, messengers, who had been sent to see whether he required any aid, for his allies had observed many smokes, and were afraid that Cortes was in need of their assistance. Cortes thanked the messengers warmly, told them that, thanks be to God, the Spaniards had always had the victory, and that glad as he was at the good will their province had shown, he was still more glad of having an opportunity of making them confederates with the Chalcans,

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which he succeeded in doing; and afterwards they assisted one another.

In three days after this business was settled, Cortes despatched Sandoval for the materials of the brigantines. When the Alguazil Mayor approached the territory of Tlascala, he found that the expedition had already set out. The men appointed to carry the materials were eight thousand. There was another body of two thousand, to furnish a relief for the bearers, and to carry provisions; and the escort consisted of a body of twenty thousand armed men. A noted warrior of Tlascala, called Chichimecatl, led the van with ten thousand, and the other ten thousand brought up the rear under the command of two other Tlascalan Chiefs. On entering an enemy's country different arrangements had to be made. Chichimecatl had had the wood-work (*la tablazon*) of the brigantines under his charge, and the other captains the rigging and cordage (*la ligazon*). It was now thought advisable to throw the heavier part of the burden in the rear; but it was with the greatest difficulty that they could persuade the brave Chieftain to accept that position. At last, however, the march was thus arranged. In front came eight horsemen and a hundred Spanish foot; then ten thousand Tlascalans, forming an advance-guard, and also with wings thrown out to the right and the left; then came the bearers of the rigging and cordage; after them the bearers of the heavier burdens; and the whole line of march was closed by eight more Spanish horsemen, a hundred Spanish foot,

The order of the march for carrying the materials of the brigantines.

and Chichimecatl with his force of ten thousand men. It would have been worth while for the Mexicans to have made almost any efforts and any sacrifice to have cut off or embarrassed this formidable reinforcement; but they did not do so, and in three days' time it approached Tezcuco. Cortes went out to meet it; the Indians put on their plumes of feathers and their handsome dresses, and the procession joyfully entered Tezcuco to the sound of musical instruments. From the van-guard to the rear-guard it occupied two leagues in length, and was six hours in entering the town, without the ranks being broken. Cortes thinks that this was a marvellous exploit, and so it was, but not one of such difficulty as that of Vasco Nuñez when he transported his ships from Acla to the sea-side. The Tlascalans expressed their longing to be led against the Mexicans, and their readiness to die in company with the Spaniards. Cortes thanked them, and told them that for the present they must rest themselves, but that very soon he would give them their hands full of work to be done.

The escort enters Tezcuco.

While his ships were being put together, Cortes went out to reconnoitre, taking with him a considerable force of his own men and thirty thousand of his allies. As he did not yet quite trust the Tezcucans, he did not let them know of his purpose or even of the direction of his march. His object, however, was to have some personal communication with the Mexicans. He, therefore, went round the north part of

Cortes goes out to reconnoitre.

Book X. Ch. 10.

the Salt Lake, and after the usual encounters, succeeded in occupying Tlacuba, a town which was in close communication with Mexico. Very "pretty" combats took place every day between the Tlascalans and the Mexicans, and much vituperation was interchanged. Frequently the Spaniards and their allies made an entrance along the causeway into the suburbs of Mexico. Then, discourses such as Homer in more dignified language would have commemorated, passed between the combatants. "Come in, come in, and rest yourselves," exclaimed the indignant Mexicans; or they would say, "Perhaps you think there is now another Montezuma, so that you may do just what pleases you?" But one memorable conversation they held with Cortes himself, he being on one side of an aperture in the causeway where the bridge had been taken up, and they being on the other. The Spanish General made a sign to his men that they should be quiet, and the Mexican Chiefs on their side caused silence to be maintained amongst their people. Cortes began by asking whether they were madmen, and if it was their wish to be destroyed. He then demanded to know if any principal Lord was present amongst them, and, if so, requested he would approach, that they might have a conference. The Mexicans replied that all that multitude of warriors whom he saw there were Lords; wherefore that he should say whatever he wanted to say. But Cortes, probably seeing from the temper and bearing of the Mexicans that nothing was to be done in this

Singular interview between Cortes and the Mexicans.

conference, remained silent, upon which they began to mock him, when some one on the Spanish side shouted out "that the Mexicans were dying of hunger, and that we should not permit them to go out and seek food." They replied that they were in no want of it, and that if they should be they would eat the Spaniards and the Tlascalans. Then one of them took some maize cakes, and threw them at the Spaniards, saying, "Take and eat, if you are hungry, for we are not so in the least;" and then they began immediately to shout and to fight. Cortes, seeing that there was no likelihood of obtaining a favourable reply to his overtures, and wishing to hasten the completion of the brigantines, returned to Tezcuco, after remaining six days in Tlacuba.

Cortes returns to Tezcuco.

After his return to Tezcuco, Cortes received another message from the Chalcans, imploring assistance, and he again sent Sandoval to them, who was completely victorious over the Mexicans in the open field.

The heart of Cortes was now gladdened by the news of fresh reinforcements from Spain, which came in three vessels. It was, probably, in one of these vessels that the King's Treasurer, Juan de Alderete, arrived. There came also at this time a certain friar, named Pedro de Aria, who brought indulgences from the Pope, so that if the soldiers were "somewhat indebted" (and the ways of war are not particularly sinless) they might compound for their transgressions;

Arrival of reinforcements and of a Royal Treasurer.

Book X. Ch. 10.

and we shall not be astonished to hear that the friar soon became rich.*

Another branding of slaves.

Sandoval having returned with many slaves, there was again a day of branding; but the same kind of injustice that the common soldiers had complained of was repeated, so that in future they did not bring their Indian female slaves to be branded, but pretended that they were *naborias* (that is, domestic servants), and that they had come peaceably from the neighbouring *pueblos*.†

The Chalcans were again harassed by their enemies, and again they summoned Cortes to their aid, sending him a large picture, on a white cloth, of the *pueblos* that were coming against them, and of the roads that they were taking. How it is to be wished that the Spaniards had adopted the same mode of description, and that we possessed now any single drawing of a Mexican building that we could thoroughly rely upon!

Cortes, partly with a view to succour these Chalcans, who were a continual care to him, and partly to make a thorough survey of the borders of the Lake, now undertook an expedition southwards. It was full of adventure and of risk for

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* "Traxo unas Bulas de señor S. Pedro, y con ellas nos componian, si algo eramos en cargo en las guerras en que andavamos: por manera que en pocos meses el fraile fué rico y compuesto á Castilla." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 143.

† "Deziamos que eran Naborias, que avian venido de paz de los pueblos comarcanos, y de Tlascala."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 143.

him; but, as it had no bearing on the main events of the war, I shall not give it in detail. It was in the course of this expedition, after he had been in great peril of his life, and had lost two of his grooms, who were carried off to be sacrificed, that he was standing at Tlacuba, looking at the great temple (which was clearly visible from there), and thinking, it is supposed, of all that he had suffered in the *noche triste*, when he was heard to sigh deeply. It was this expression of sorrow which gave rise to a romance, well known at the time, beginning with the following words:—

The sadness of Cortes.

"En Tacuba está Cortés,
Con su esquadron esforçado,
Triste estava y mui penoso,
Triste y con gran cuidado:
La una mano en la mexilla,
Y la otra en el costado," &c.*

Bernal Diaz, who must have been present, remembered that the Bachiller, Alonso Perez, endeavoured to comfort Cortes. "Señor Captain," he said, "let not your Honour be so sad, for in war these things are wont to occur, and, at least, it will not be said of you,

"Mira Nero de Tarpeya
A Roma como se ardia;"†

and Cortes answered that Alonso Perez knew how often he had sent to Mexico, in order to persuade

* Bernal Diaz, cap. 145.

† "Mira Nero de Tarpeya
A Roma como se ardia;
Gritos dan niños y viejos,
Y él de nada se dolia.
Que alegre vista!"

"Parece que este romance sobre el incendio de Roma gozó de gran valimiento entre el público, pues está contenido en muchas colecciones, si bien muy diferente en unas de como va en otras."—*Romances sobre varios asuntos*, Núm. 46. Depping, *Romancero Castellano.*

its citizens to make peace; and that the sadness which he felt was not for one thing alone, but in thinking of all that would have to be encountered before the Spaniards should obtain the mastery.*

Cortes was quite justified in making this statement, for previously to this expedition he had sent three Mexican Chiefs, who had been captured in the war against the Chalcans, with a letter containing proposals for peace, the tenour of which he had carefully explained to them by interpreters. Nor was this the only occasion, for he had lost no opportunity of sending back any Mexican who fell into his hands, instructing him to admonish his fellow-citizens, and urge them to submit themselves to the Spaniards.†

Cortes having concluded this expedition round

* It will astonish those who have been accustomed to consider Cortes as little else than a compound of craft and cruelty, to see him display such tenderness on this, and on other occasions. They will recal the massacre at Cholula, and the ferocious condemnation of Qualpopoca and of those other Mexican officers who had merely executed the commands of their sovereign. But it is highly probable that this tenderness of Cortes was an essential part of his character; and, in truth, it does not need much knowledge of mankind to discern how little a man's actions may tell of himself, and how the most striking deeds of his life may be very unlike the deepest parts of his character.

In future years we find the Conqueror of Mexico delighting in the society of polished and learned men, and his house, like the country seat of Leo the Tenth, becoming a resort for persons who loved to discuss philosophy.

"Pedro de Navarra published, in 1567, forty Moral Dialogues, partly the result of conversations held in an *Academia* of distinguished persons, who met, from time to time, at the house of Fernando Cortés."—Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. 1, p. 493.

† "Donde quiera que podia haber alguno de la Ciudad, gelo tornaba á embiar para les amonestar, y requerir, que se diessen de Paz."—Lorenzana, p. 216.

Villafaña's conspiracy.

the Lake, during which he underwent great peril, returned to a still greater peril of a domestic nature. A man of the name of Villafaña, a great friend of the Governor of Cuba, acting in concert with some other soldiers of the party of Narvaez, formed a conspiracy to murder Cortes. The plan was as follows. They had heard that a vessel had just come from Spain, so that letters and dispatches might be immediately expected. They intended, therefore, to enter the apartment of Cortes when he was seated at table, eating in company with his captains and soldiers;* they would then offer him a letter, saying that it came from his father, Martin Cortes, and while he was reading it they would stab him and the rest of the company. They had arranged who was to succeed him in the command, and many persons were implicated in the conspiracy. But all conspiracies are in this dilemma;—either the secret is entrusted to very few, in which case the conspirators are weak and unprepared for the emergency when it comes—or rather for the transactions after the emergency,—or it is entrusted to many, and unless acted upon instantly, can hardly be kept a secret. In this case too many had been consulted, and a common soldier betrayed the secret. Cortes summoned his own adherents, with the alcaldes and alguazils, entered Villafaña's apartments, and made him prisoner. Cortes then took from him a memorial which contained the

It is defeated.

* "Quando Cortés estuviesse sentado á la mesa comiendo con sus Capitanes é soldados."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 146.

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signatures of the conspirators, but afterwards gave out that Villafaña had eaten this paper, and that he, Cortes, had never seen it. Villafaña was executed, and several other persons were imprisoned, but no one besides Villafaña suffered capitally. This plot gave an opportunity to Cortes to institute without offence a guard for his own person, which was afterwards of signal service to him during the siege of Mexico. Thus this danger turned out, as so many had done before, a source of safety to Cortes: indeed, a wise man can generally make some considerable profit out of past dangers and sufferings, which, perhaps, is but fulfilling one of the chief intentions of human life.

Cortes establishes a body-guard.

Everything was now ready for the great enterprize of the siege of Mexico,—the turning point of the fortunes of Cortes. His brigantines had been put together. The canal was finished along which they were to be launched from Tezcuco into the Lake. He had exhausted his efforts to bring the Mexicans to terms. He had made, in person, a thorough survey of the adjacent country; and he was rich in alliances with many of the neighbouring states. He now summoned his Indian allies to his aid. They were desired to come from Cholula, Tlascala, Chalco, Huaxocingo, and other towns, and to join his forces at Tezcuco within ten days. Though Tezcuco was a large town it could not contain the Indian allies. The Tlascalans came in good equipment and with admirable spirit, eager for the

Cortes summons his Indian allies.

fray.* Bernal Diaz well compares the clouds of Indians who followed in their march to the birds of rapine which were wont to follow an army in Italy; and the comparison was not merely a poetical or fanciful one, as the food both of the foul birds and of the Indians was occasionally human flesh.† His Indian allies, however, were not merely useful to Cortes, but absolutely requisite; and it would have been ludicrous to have attempted the siege of Mexico without them. Cortes went out to meet his especial friends, the Tlascalans, and addressed the Spaniards in their presence somewhat in the following manner:—

Speech of Cortes to his men in the presence of the Tlascalans.

Enlarging upon the quality of the enterprize, and the honour which would be gained in subduing the finest and largest city in the world (*la mejor y mayor ciudad del mundo*), he said, that, putting aside the service of God, which was the most important thing, great glory was to be gained; and also vengeance for the affront they had received; moreover such a conquest for their King as mortal men had never before accom-

* "Entraron en Tetzcuco dos Dias antes de la Fiesta de Espíritu Santo, y toda la Gente tardó tres Dias en entrar, segun en sus Memoriales dice Alonso de Ojeda, ni con ser Tetzcuco tan gran Ciudad, cabian en ella; venian galanes, bien armados, deseosos de pelear, como lo mostraron bien."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 89.

† "Iba tanta multitud de ellos á causa de los despojos que avian de aver: y lo mas cierto, por hartarse de carne humana, si huviesse batallas, porque bien sabian, que las avia de aver, y son á manera de dezir, como quando en Italia salia un exército de una parte á otra, y les seguian cuervos, y milanos, y otras aves de rapiña, que se mantenian de los cuerpos muertos que quedavan en el campo quando se dava alguna mui sangrienta batalla: ansí he juzgado, que nos seguian tantos millares de Indios."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 144.

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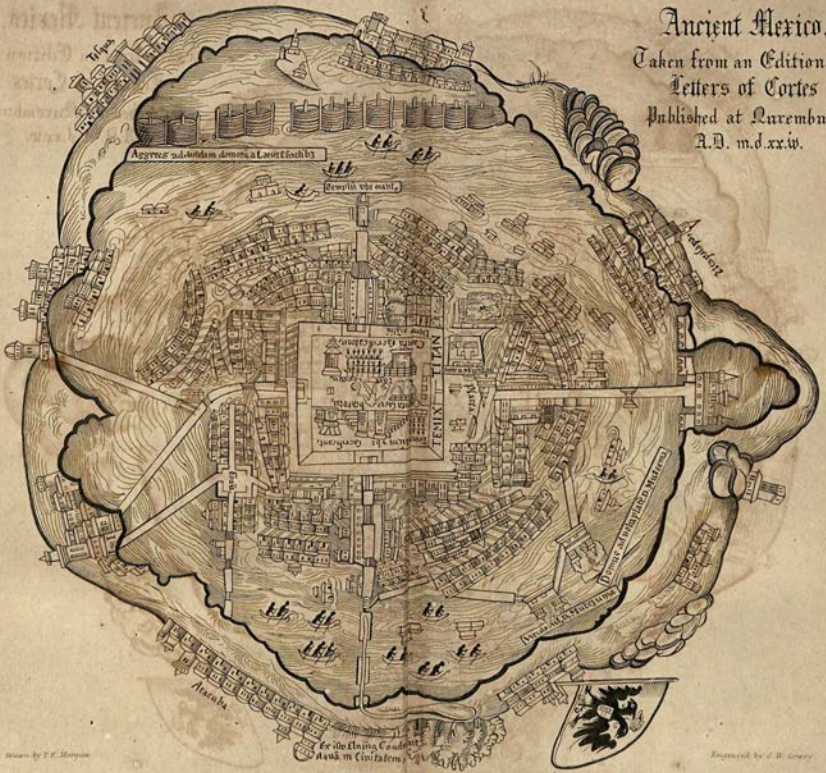
plished on behalf of any monarch. He reminded them that they were Castillians, a warlike and most brave nation; that, including their allies, they had an army such as the Romans had never collected together; that they had vessels to destroy their enemies' canoes, and to enter into the streets of the city of Mexico, and also that they were well provided with supplies. He said that with their brigantines they were masters upon the water; with their horses, upon the open plain: while their position upon the Terra-firma enabled them to retire, if it should be necessary. He concluded by telling them that no great thing was ever done but at great sacrifice (*que nunca mucho costó poco*); and then he spoke to them of all the rewards of victory, not, as he said, to give them courage, for he well knew that they had no need of that, but only to remind them who they were, and what was their enterprize, that they might enter upon it with joy and contentment, since, as honourable men, this war had been undertaken by them for the sake of God and of themselves.

The soldiers respond to the exhortation of Cortes.

The principal captains replied that the whole army understood that it was an agreement amongst them not to quit the siege until they conquered or died, and that they came to this resolve with greater willingness, having him for their General with whom they were well contented, as they were ready to prove by their deeds.

Ancient Mexico.

Taken from an Edition of the Letters of Cortes Published at Nuremburg A.D. m.d.xx.iv.


Tezcuco
Aggeres ad oppidum deducti a Cortesio
Templum
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BOOK XI.

THE SIEGE OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPANIARDS AND THEIR ALLIES COMMENCE THE SIEGE—DEFEAT OF THE MEXICANS ON THE LAKE —MEXICO ENTIRELY INVESTED—COUNCIL SUMMONED BY THE MEXICAN KING—RESULT OF THE FIRST GENERAL ATTACK — THE VARIOUS SUCCESSES OF ALVARADO'S DIVISION — IMPATIENCE OF THE SOLDIERS—THE SECOND GENERAL ATTACK —THE SPANIARDS DEFEATED.

CHAPTER II.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE DEFEAT—THE SIEGE LANGUISHES — CORTES SENDS AID TO HIS INDIAN ALLIES—THE ALLIES RETURN TO THE CAMP OF CORTES—THE SIEGE IS PRESSED—THE MEXICANS WILL NOT TREAT WITH CORTES — MEXICO IS TAKEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPANIARDS AND THEIR ALLIES COMMENCE THE SIEGE—DEFEAT OF THE MEXICANS ON THE LAKE—MEXICO ENTIRELY INVESTED—COUNCIL SUMMONED BY THE MEXICAN KING—RESULT OF THE FIRST GENERAL ATTACK—THE VARIOUS SUCCESSES OF ALVARADO'S DIVISION—IMPATIENCE OF THE SOLDIERS—THE SECOND GENERAL ATTACK—THE SPANIARDS DEFEATED.

CORTES formed his troops into three divisions, placing one under the command of Pedro de Alvarado, another under Cristoval de Olid, and the third under Gonzalo de Sandoval, the Alguazil Mayor.

Alvarado's division.

Pedro de Alvarado had thirty horsemen, eighteen cross-bowmen or musketeers, and a hundred and fifty men with sword and buckler. Twenty thousand Tlascalan warriors accompanied this division, under the command of Xicotencatl, *el mozo*. Alvarado's division* was to take up its quarters at Tlacuba.

Olid's division.

The second division, commanded by Cristoval de Olid, the Maestre de Campo, consisted of thirty-three horsemen, eighteen cross-bowmen or musketeers, and a hundred and sixty swordsmen. A body of more than twenty thousand Indian allies

* Bernal Diaz, the historian, was in this division.

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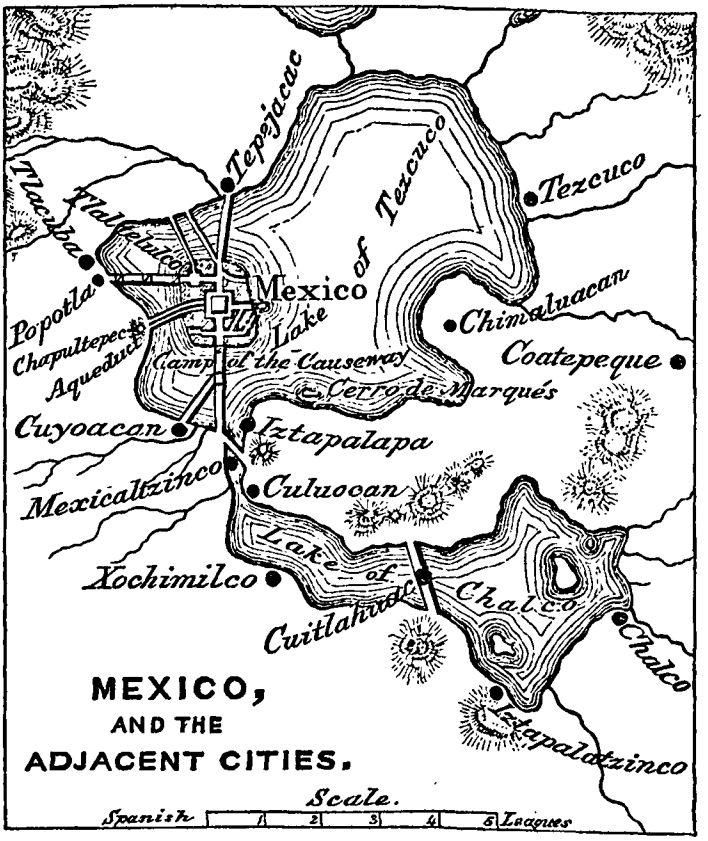
accompanied this force, which was to take up its position in Cuyoacan.

Sandoval's division.

Sandoval, the Alguazil Mayor, had under his command twenty-four horsemen, four musketeers, thirteen cross-bowmen, and a hundred and fifty



swordsmen, fifty of them being picked young men; a sort of body-guard, as I conceive, to Cortes.* The Indian allies who accompanied this division, amounted to more than thirty thou-

* "Mancebos escogidos, que yo trahía en mi Compañía."—Lorenzana, p. 235.

sand, being all those who came from Huaxocingo, Cholula, and Chalco. This division was to march to Iztapalapa, destroy it, pass on by a causeway under cover of the brigantines, and unite with Olid's division at Cuyoacan, in the neighbourhood of which the Alguazil Mayor was to choose a spot for his camp.

The brigantines commanded by Cortes in person.

There were left, to man the brigantines, more than three hundred men, most of them good seamen—each brigantine having twenty-five men, with six cross-bowmen or musketeers. Contrary to the advice of the principal personages* in his army, but very wisely, Cortes had determined to lead this division himself, for, as he afterwards remarked, the key† of the whole war was in the ships.

Previously, however, to the first division of the army leaving for Tezcuco, an incident occurred which might have been fraught with the most serious consequences. To regulate the behaviour of his men towards each other is always one of the greatest difficulties for the general of an allied army, and one that requires the nicest management. Cortes did all that he could, by

* "Aunque yo deseaba mucho irme por la Tierra, por dar órden en los Reales, como los Capitanes eran Personas de quien se podia muy bien fiar lo que tenian entre manos, y lo de los Bergantines importaba mucha importancia, y se requeria gran concierto, y cuidado, determiné de me meter en ellos, porque la mas aventura, y riesgo era el que se esperaba por el Agua, aunque por las Personas Principales de mi Compañía me fué requerido en formar, que me fuesse con las Guarniciones, porque ellos pensaban, que ellas llevaban lo mas peligroso."—Lorenzana, p. 240.

† La llave de toda la Guerra estaba en ellos."—Lorenzana, p. 242.

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good rules, stringently maintained, to make his Spaniards behave well to his Indians. It happened, however, that a Spaniard inflicted some personal injury upon a cousin of Xicotencatl, the younger, the Tlascalan Prince who had formerly commanded the armies of that republic against Cortes. Whether in consequence of this new disgust, or from his old grudge, or, as some say, from the wish to see a Tlascalan lady,* Xicotencatl resolved to throw up his command, and to quit the camp. It is not improbable that his conduct was influenced by motives which might be termed treasonable, or patriotic, according to the point of view from which they are regarded; and he may have thought it a good opportunity for raising the standard of revolt against the Spaniards.

It was arranged that the Tlascalans attached to Alvarado's division should set off a day before the Spaniards, in order not to embarrass them in the march. As the Tlascalans were proceeding carelessly along, Chichimecatl, the brave warrior who had brought the brigantines from Tlascala, and had been so displeased at not being allowed to lead the van-guard, observed that their General, Xicotencatl, was not with them. He returned immediately, and informed Cortes. The Spanish General lost no time in despatching messengers who were to adjure the fugitive Tlascalan Chief to resume his command, begging him to consider that his father, Don Lorenzo (the old

The Tlascalan General deserts his army.

* See Torquemada, lib. 4, cap. 90.

Tlascalan Chief had been baptized), if he had not been old and blind, would himself have led his countrymen against Mexico. To this Xicotencatl replied, that, if his father and Magisca had listened to him, they would not have been so much lorded over by the Spaniards, who made them do whatever they wished; and he gave for his final answer, that he would not return. Cortes, being informed of this reply, immediately ordered an alguazil, with four horsemen and five Indian chiefs, to go in pursuit of Xicotencatl, and, wherever they should come up with him, to hang him. This sentence was carried into effect, notwithstanding that Pedro de Alvarado interceded warmly in behalf of the Tlascalan Prince. It will show the reverence which the Indians entertained for their princes, that many of them came to seek a scrap of his clothes;* and it is another instance of the stern audacity of Cortes, that he should have ventured to put such a potent chief to death at so critical a period. But, as will hereafter be seen, it was very fortunate that he did so. The three things in a man's character which are best rewarded in this world are boldness, hardness, and circumspection. Cortes possessed the first and last qualifications in the highest degree; and, if he were not by nature a

Xicotencatl put to death.

* "En muriendo, llegaron muchos Indios á tomar la Manta, y el Mastil, que es una Faxa ancha, que servia de Bragas, como Almaíçal; y el que llevaba un pedaço, creia, que llevaba una gran Reliquia. Atemoriçó mucho esta muerte á todos, por ser este Indio Persona mui Principal, y señalada." — Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 90.

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hard man, had the power of summoning up hardness whenever it was requisite to do so.

Alvarado and Olid quit Tezcuco. May, 1521.

On the 10th of May,* 1521, Alvarado and Olid quitted Tezcuco in company, and proceeded to occupy the positions assigned to them. The very first night after their departure these Commanders had a quarrel about the encampment of their men, which Cortes learned directly, and interposing with all speed, sent an officer that night with instructions to reprimand these Generals, and afterwards to make them friends again. On their way to Tlacuba they found the intervening towns deserted, and, when they came to Tlacuba itself, that city also was without inhabitants. The army occupied the palace of the King, and, though it was the hour of Vespers when they entered, the Tlascalans, with the hatred of neighbours, made a reconnaisance along two of the causeways which led to Mexico, and fought for two or three hours with the Mexicans.

The great aqueduct destroyed.

The ensuing morning Alvarado and Olid commenced the work of destruction by cutting off, according to the commands of Cortes, the great aqueduct which supplied the city. It is melancholy to observe that such works as these, which are among the greatest triumphs of civilization, should be the first objects of attack in war, but it was good service, and thoroughly executed, although not without considerable opposition from the Mexicans, both by land and water.

* Bernal Diaz says it was on the 13th of May.

On the succeeding day, Olid, with the whole of his division, moved on to Cuyoacan, described as being two leagues from Tlacuba.* They found this city also deserted,† and they occupied the regal palace there.

Olid moves to Cuyoacan.

It was now time for Cortes himself to quit Tezcuco, and commence operations in concert with the Alguazil Mayor. At four in the morning, on the day after the Festival of Corpus Christi, Cortes despatched Sandoval with the whole of his division, to Iztapalapa. That city was about seven short leagues distant. They arrived there a little after mid-day, and began to set fire to the houses, and to attack the inhabitants. These were a maritime race (the town was half built upon the lake), and, not being able to withstand the immense‡ force which Sandoval brought against them, took to the water in their canoes, whereupon the Alguazil Mayor occupied the town without further molestation.

Cortes sends Sandoval to Iztapalapa.

* I give the distances generally from the words of the first Conquerors. These distances, however, will not always correspond with the actual distances as ascertained by modern investigation, and sometimes, indeed, differ from them widely, as in the above instance. I conjecture that the word league, as used by Cortes or Bernal Diaz, represented a very variable quantity, and depended much upon the nature of the ground traversed, namely, whether it were champaign, hilly, or wooded.

† In the estimate which we shall afterwards have to make of the numbers which perished in the siege of Mexico, it must be recollected that immense additions to the population of the place were made by the abandonment of these flourishing towns on the borders of the lake.

‡ It appears to have been increased since the original division of the forces, for it is now spoken of as thirty-five thousand or forty thousand men.

Cortes sets sail from Tezcuco.

Cortes, who was the last of the generals to quit Tezcuco, set sail with the brigantines immediately after he had despatched Sandoval to Iztapalapa, and using both oars and sails, came within sight of the town at the time that Sandoval was entering it. Cortes had intended to have attacked that part of the town which lay in the water, but seeing probably that Sandoval would be able to accomplish the work without him, and observing that a large hill which rose out of the water (now called the *Cerro de Marqués*) was covered with the enemy, he commenced his attack upon their position on that eminence. It was very lofty and very abrupt, and the heights were fortified by walls of dry stones; but the Spaniards succeeded in forcing the entrenchments, and put all the defenders to the sword, except the women and children. Five and twenty Spaniards were wounded, but, as Cortes says, "it was a very pretty victory."*

The first success of Cortes.

The citizens of Iztapalapa had made smoke-signals (*ahumadas*) from the tops of some temples which were situated upon a very lofty hill, close to the town. From these signals, the Mexicans and the inhabitants of the other towns upon the borders of the lake, learnt the position of the Spanish vessels, and forthwith sent out a great flotilla of five hundred canoes, which bore down straight upon the brigantines. Cortes and his men instantly quitted their position on the hill, and embarked in their vessels. The orders to

500 Mexican canoes come out to attack the Spaniards.

* "Pero fué muy hermosa Victoria."—Lorenzana, p. 241.

the captains were, on no account to move until Cortes should give the command. His object was to avoid any partial or disjointed action, and, if he struck at all, to strike a great blow,* such as should at once ensure his naval ascendancy. Silently, therefore, and as if entranced, the brigantines rested upon the water; while the vast multitude of canoes came rushing on, the Mexicans exhausting their strength in their haste to encompass the brigantines. When they had come within two bow-shots of the Spaniards, they rested upon their oars, and gazed upon the new form of their enemy. Still, the Spaniards did not move, and the hostile armaments remained in this position until, as Cortes says, "it pleased Our Lord" that a favourable breeze should arise from the land, upon which, the Spanish Commander immediately gave orders to commence the attack. The weighty brigantines bore down upon the light craft of the enemy with a fatal impetus, crushing them together wherever they came in contact with them. It soon became a total defeat. Numbers of the canoes were sunk, and the Mexican sailors in them destroyed. It must have been a flight almost as soon as it was an encounter; and the brigantines pursued the canoes for three long leagues, until they took refuge in the water streets of Mexico. Indeed, that any remained to escape was only owing to the multitude there were to destroy. Thus ended

The Mexicans are defeated on the lake.

* "Como yo deseaba mucho, que el primer reencuentro, que con ellos obiessemos, fuesse de mucha victoria."—Lorenzana, p. 241.

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the hopes of the Mexicans of gaining, by their numbers, any advantage on the water; and the maxim of the great modern warrior* was again signally exemplified,—namely, that the art of war is the art of being strongest at the immediate point of encounter. If the Mexicans could literally have covered the lake of Tezcuco with canoes, the force and weight of a brigantine, whenever it came in contact with these small vessels, gave it instantly such a decided superiority, as to leave no scope for action on the other side.

Successful movement of Olid's division.

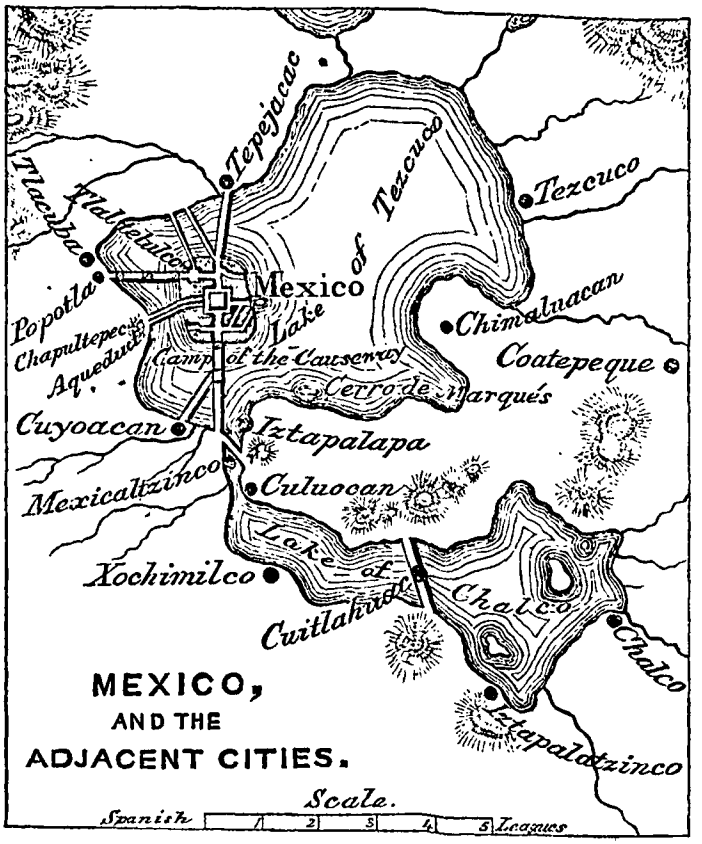
Meanwhile, the division under Olid at Cuyoacan could see and rejoice in the victory of their fellow-countrymen. They immediately resolved to enhance it, by making a vigorous charge along the causeway which connected that city with Mexico; and, with the aid of the brigantines, (which, after giving chase to the Mexican boats, approached the causeway), this division of the army succeeded in making a victorious advance of more than a league upon the causeway.

Cortes lands on the southern causeway.

At the point of the causeway where Cortes and his brigantines arrived, after chasing the Mexican boats into the city, there happened to be one or two idol towers, surrounded by a low stone wall. He landed, took the towers after a sharp contest, and then brought up three heavy cannon from the brigantines. The causeway was crowded with the enemy from that spot to the very gates of Mexico; and, moreover, there were numbers of canoes, on that side at least of the causeway

* Napoleon.

where the brigantines were not, or where they could not get at them. Cortes brought one of the guns to bear upon the dense masses of the enemy, and the effect of that fire must have been tremendous. Happily for the Mexicans, there was



a deficiency of powder, arising from the carelessness of an artilleryman, by which a quantity had been ignited; and thus Cortes was unable to follow up this advantage.

The Spanish Commander had originally intended to proceed to the camp at Cuyoacan; but,

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with that power of rapidly changing his plans which is one of the elements in the character of a great general, he determined to take up a position at the spot where he now was, and to summon reinforcements both from Sandoval's and Olid's camp. That first night was a night of much danger for the "Camp of the Causeway" (*Real de la Calzada*), as Cortes calls it, for the Mexicans, notwithstanding the defeat and loss which they had suffered during the day, made a midnight attack upon the Spaniards. Cortes, however, had not failed to send at once to Sandoval at Iztapalapa for all the gunpowder which was in that camp; and, as each brigantine had a small field-gun (*tiro pequeño de campo*), the Spaniards were enabled to make a vigorous resistance. Thus the enemy were beaten off for that night.

The "Camp of the Causeway."

The next morning, at early dawn, reinforcements arrived at the Camp of the Causeway, and they hardly had arrived, before the Mexicans issued from the city and commenced their attack, both by land and by water, and with such shouts and yells, that it seemed as if heaven and earth were coming together. But "loud cries divide no flesh," while the thunder of cannon significantly represents the destruction it accompanies. The Spaniards succeeded in gaining one bridge and one barricade, and drove the Mexicans back to the nearest houses of the city. The brigantines were upon the east side of the causeway, and, consequently, the canoes could approach

The second day's siege.

with less danger on the western side. Cortes, alert to seize every advantage, broke up a small portion of the causeway near his camp, and made four brigantines pass through it. He was thus enabled to drive back the western fleet of canoes into the water-streets of the city. The rest of the brigantines not only put to flight the enemy on their side of the causeway, but, finding* canals into which they could enter securely, they were enabled to capture several of the Mexican canoes, and also to burn many houses in the suburbs. Thus ended the second day of the siege.

On the next morning Sandoval fought his way from Iztapalapa to Cuyoacan, and afterwards arrived at the Camp of the Causeway in time to take part in a little battle, in which he was wounded. For six days the fighting continued much in the same manner as when Cortes first arrived, the brigantines, however, gaining great advantages, especially by means of a large canal which they discovered, that went all round the city, and enabled them to penetrate into some of the densest parts of it, and thus to do considerable damage. They had now so completely quelled the small craft of the Mexicans, that no canoe ventured to approach within a quarter of a league of the Camp of the Causeway.

The brigantines enter a great canal.

On the seventh or eighth day, Pedro de Al-

* In the course of the siege several circumstances occur which show how immense must have been the size of Mexico. Notwithstanding their former stay in the city, it appears from the expression "finding," that the Spaniards were up to that time ignorant of the existence of those canals.

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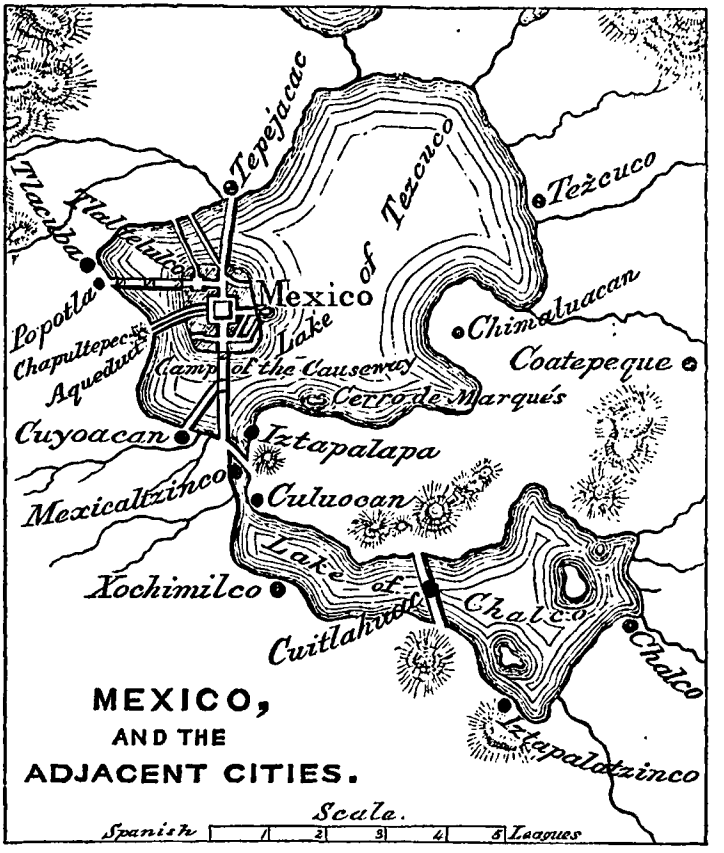
varado sent from Tlacuba to inform Cortes that there was a causeway* at the other end of the town, by which the Mexicans went in and out as they pleased. This was the causeway which led to Tepejacac. Upon receiving this intelligence,

Another causeway discovered.



* The error, as it seems, to me, in the general descriptions of Mexico, given both by the Conquerors and those who came after them, is in not mentioning causeways enough. There was another little causeway close to this large one, which also was connected with the terrá firma, and was commanded by Sandoval's camp. There is still a causeway unaccounted for, according to the most ancient map of Mexico.

Cortes sent the Alguazil Mayor to occupy a position in front of this newly-discovered causeway. He took this step because he felt that it was requisite in order to complete the investment of the place: otherwise, as he remarks, he would have been more glad of the Mexicans going out of the city than they could have been themselves, for he well knew how to deal with them in the open plain. From that day forward, the city of Mexico was entirely invested.

Sandoval sent to that quarter.

Mexico entirely invested.

We must now turn for a moment from the besiegers to the besieged. When Quauhtemotzin, the Priest-King of Mexico, perceived that the siege had commenced in earnest,—and with sieges, as appears from their architecture, these warriors were well acquainted,—he summoned a great council of his lords and captains. Then, laying before them the state in which they were,—the revolt of many of their tributary provinces, the want of fresh water, the strength of the brigantines, the destruction which had already taken place of some of the principal posts of defence, the dangers and miseries to which they must look forward,—he asked what was their opinion about coming to terms with the Spaniards? In reply to the Monarch's question the young men and the warriors expressed their desire for war.* There were others, however, who said, that as they had four Spaniards and several

Quauhtemotzin's speech to his council.

* "Los Mancebos, y Gente gallarda, queria la Guerra."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 90.

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Indians whom they had taken, and were about to sacrifice, but that they should be in no haste to do so, in order that, if things went worse with them, they might in a few days' time, through the medium of these prisoners, commence negociations. Others, again, more religiously inclined, maintained that their only course was, with many sacrifices and prayers, to commend themselves to the gods, whose cause was at stake;* and that the Mexican people should trust in the goodness of these superior beings not to forsake them.

Their voice was for a continuance of the war.

The fanatical counsel prevailed. Not, I think, that even in Mexico there were not wise men enough to have contended against such fanaticism; but, from the former conduct of the Spaniards, there was so little to be said on the other side. In truth,—as the son-in-law of Montezuma afterwards informed the historian Oviedo,†—after the attack of Alvarado upon the unarmed chiefs in the temple, the Mexicans put no more trust in the Spaniards. This man, Pedro de Alvarado, was one of the most pernicious adventurers of those times. It seldom happens to any one person to be a mighty cause of mischief, al-

Pedro de Alvarado, a pernicious conqueror.

* "Otros, en ninguna manera querian, sino que con muchos Sacrificios, y Oraciones, se encomendasen á los Dioses, cuia causa se trataba, confiando en su bondad, que no los desamparariam."—Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 90.

† "Señor alcayde, esso que preguntays es un passo, en que pocos de los que hay en la tierra sabrán dar raçon, aunque ello fué muy notorio, é muy manifiesta la sinraçon que á los indios se les hiço; é de allí tomaron tanto odio con los chripstianos, que no fiaron mas dellos, é se siguieron quantos males ovo despues, é la rebelion de México, y passó desta manera."—Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. y Nat.*, lib. 33, cap. 54.

most the cause of downfall, to two great empires; but such were Alvarado's fortunes, as may be seen in the histories of Peru and Mexico, the latter of which he ruined directly, and the former indirectly, and in both cases by acts of wonderful audacity and folly. It has often surprised me that Cortes should have placed so much confidence in such a man; but distinguished personal bravery is such an advantage,—and it was much more so in those times than in the present,—that Cortes may well be excused for putting his trust in a man, who, at least, was never known to falter in action.

The prudent councillors in the Mexican assembly had, therefore, little or nothing to urge for their view of the question but the probability of more and more disasters. They were overruled; the prisoners were sacrificed; the gods appeased: their responses became gracious, and the King braced up all his energies for war. "Some have been of opinion," says the Spanish historian of the Indies, "that the Devil was not in the habit of appearing to the Indians, and that if he did appear to them at all, it was very seldom: and that the responses of the gods were the invention of the priests to preserve the authority which these men had over that people."* The Priest-King must have known well the nature of the visions and

The King determines upon war.

* "Algunos han tenido opinion, que el demonio no se aparecia á los Indios, y que si lo hazia era muy de tarde en tarde: y que era invencion de los sacerdotes, para conservar el imperio que tenian, sobre aquella gente."—Herrera, *Hist. de las Indias*, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 17.

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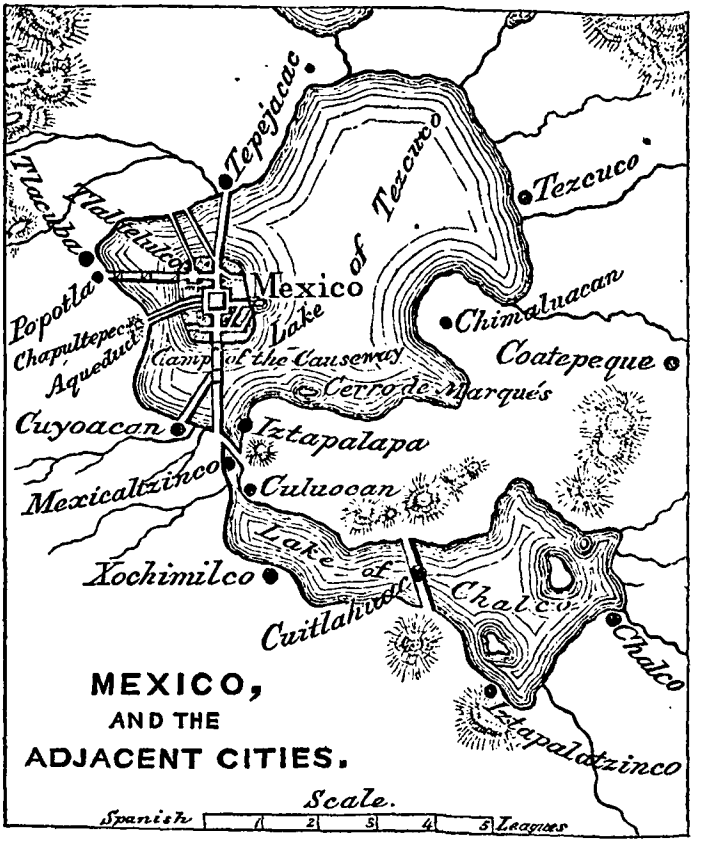
revelations which were reported to the common people; but the fate of Montezuma was before his eyes. The people were for war; the Spaniards were few; and there would not be wanting those who could calculate, as on a former occasion, how many Mexicans might be advantageously sacrificed for one Spaniard. The Tlascalans and all the Indian allies of the Spaniards were as nothing in the eyes of the Mexicans; and so the war was again resumed with fury.*

Cortes resolves upon a general attack.

Cortes now determined to make a combined attack upon the city. For this purpose, on the eighth or ninth day after the beginning of the siege, he sent for additional forces from the Camp of Cuyoacan, where he was still obliged to leave a detachment, in order to protect the rear from any attack that might be made by the inhabitants of Xochimilco, Culuocan, Iztapalapa, Mexicaltzinco, and other places neighbouring to the lake, which had "rebelled," according to Spanish phraseology, that is, which had renewed their allegiance to their old friends and masters, the Mexicans. The combined attack was arranged by Cortes in the following manner. The swordsmen, cross-bowmen, and musketeers were to form the advance-guard; they were to be supported by brigantines on both sides of the causeway; and a small body of horse was to keep guard on the causeway in the rear of the foot-soldiers.

* It is impossible to say at what precise time this council took place, for, as may be conceived, we know so much less of what took place amongst the besieged than amongst the besiegers.

Some cavalry also were to accompany the attacking force. The number of the allies who, according to his own account, were to march with Cortes on this occasion, amounted to no less than eighty thousand; and the siege was to be pressed



at two other points, by the Alguazil Mayor and Pedro de Alvarado. It is manifest, therefore, that the Mexicans would have enough to do on this day.

Cortes moved from the Camp of the Causeway early in the morning. The first obstacle his

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troops met with was a breach in the causeway, which the Mexicans must have made in the night. The aperture was as broad as a lance is long, and its depth was equal to its breadth. The Mexicans had also made a barricade on the other side, and were posted behind it. There the battle commenced, and was very stoutly maintained on both sides. At last the Spaniards succeeded in forcing this position, and marched along the causeway, until they came to the entrance of the city, where there was an idol tower, at the foot of which had been a very large bridge—probably, in part, a drawbridge. This had been lifted up, or destroyed, and on the other side a strong barricade had been formed. This point of defence was much stronger than the last, for the breadth of the opening was much greater, and, in fact, it was a very broad water-street (*una calle de agua muy ancha*). Here, therefore, the Mexicans were strongly posted; but again they were beaten back by the aid of the brigantines, which, it is easy to see, had the great advantage of being able to deploy to the right and the left in the water-street, and so, with their small cannon, cross-bowmen, and musketeers, to take the Mexicans in the flank. By these means they were enabled to dislodge the enemy, which feat, as Cortes himself observes, it would have been impossible to effect without their assistance.

The general attack commenced.

First position of the Mexicans.

Second position.

Brigantines of great service to the Spaniards.

The defenders of the barricade being put to flight, the Spaniards from the brigantines leapt on shore, and, with their assistance, the whole army contrived to pass the water. Here it was that the Indian allies were eminently useful. They

were immediately employed in filling up with stones and sun-burnt bricks that part of the water-street which formerly the bridge had spanned; and it is evident that Cortes himself, who always understood where the real difficulty lay in any action, superintended this filling up. His words are, "while *we* filled up this bridge (meaning bridge-way), the Spaniards took another barricade in the great street of the town." For the sake of clearness, I will give a name to this street, and call it the "High Street." It may be noticed, in the most ancient map of Mexico, that there is no difference in the breadth of this street from that of the main causeway. There was no water in it, and, therefore, the Spanish troops were in their element upon it, and could act with force and rapidity. The Mexicans fled until they came to another draw-bridge, which had been taken away, all but one broad beam, over which they passed, and then removed it. On the other side, these resolute and untiring men had thrown up another barricade constructed of clay and sun-burnt bricks. This was a very formidable defence. The Spaniards had now advanced beyond the support of their brigantines; and there was no passing, except by throwing themselves into the water. The houses which commanded the street were crowded with the Mexicans, who showered down missiles from the terraced house-tops; and those who were in charge of the barricade fought like lions. The potent voice, however, of cannon made itself heard above all the noise of the engagement. It was the

Use of the Indian allies.

Third position of the Mexicans.

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exact situation in which cannon would come in with the greatest effect, and Cortes had brought two field-pieces with him. The Spaniards seized an opportunity, when the Mexicans gave way before these cannon (which must have swept them down like corn before a tempest), dashed into the water, and passed to the other side. It shows the vigorous resistance which these brave Mexicans made, that it took no less than two hours to wrest this position from them. The barricade, however, being at last deserted, together with the terraces and house-tops, the whole of the assaulting party passed over the bridge-way. Cortes, again, instantly made good the road by filling up the place where the bridge had been, for which materials were ready to his hand in those of the barricade.

The third position of the Mexicans taken.

The Spanish troops, and all the Indian allies that were not wanted for filling up the bridge-way, pushed on, without encountering any obstacle, for a distance of "two cross-bow shots" in length, until they came to a spot where there was a bridge that adjoined the principal Plaza* in the town—where the best houses were situated. The Mexicans had not imagined that the Spaniards could in one day gain so advanced a position. They had accordingly made no preparations at this bridge. They had neither removed it, nor thrown up a barricade on the other side. The Plaza was so full of Mexicans that it could scarcely hold them. To command its en-

* This spot is marked "Platea" in the ancient map.

trance, the Spaniards brought up a cannon, the discharges from which must have made fearful havoc in this crowd; finally, the Spaniards charged into the Plaza, driving the Mexicans before them into the great square of the Temple, which adjoined and communicated with the Plaza. The Spaniards and their allies continued the charge, forced the Mexicans out of the square, occupied it themselves, and took possession of the towers on the Temple.

The Plaza occupied by the Spaniards.

Then the Temple.

The Mexicans, however, perceiving that the Spaniards had no horsemen with them, turned upon their enemies with immense vigour, dislodged them from the towers, drove them from the great court of the Temple, swept on with irresistible fury, cleared the Spaniards out of the Plaza, and into the High Street again, at the same time capturing the single field-piece which had done so much mischief. The Spaniards were retreating in much confusion, when "it pleased God," as Cortes says, "that three horsemen should enter the Plaza." The Mexicans seem to have had a most unreasonable dread of horses. If Montezuma, in his immense collection of animals, had possessed but one horse, and the people had learnt what a docile, timid slave a horse is, the Conquest of Mexico would have been postponed for some time—perhaps to another generation. At this juncture, however, the Mexicans were not afraid of these three horsemen alone, but, seeing them enter the narrow pathway, supposed them to be the front rank of a body of horse. They, accordingly, retreated in

The Mexicans turn upon the enemy and drive them back.

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their turn. The Spaniards, from being the pursued, became the pursuers; some of them re-entered the great square; and a fight took place on the summit of the Temple between four or five Spaniards and ten or twelve of the chief men among the Mexicans, which ended in the defeat and slaughter of all these chiefs. A few more horsemen now entered the square, which by this time was probably clear of the Mexicans; and these Spaniards contrived an ambuscade, which was successful, and by which thirty Mexicans were killed.

Spaniards successful again.

It was now evening, and Cortes gave orders for the recal of the troops; but this backward movement was not executed without considerable danger, for, though the Mexicans must have suffered terribly that day, "the dogs came on so rabidly" (*venian los perros tan rabiosos*), that even the dreaded horsemen could not drive them back, or prevent them from molesting the rear-guard of the Spaniards. They, however, reached the Camp of the Causeway in safety, their chief triumph in the day's work being, that they had burnt the principal houses in the High Street. The Spaniards, therefore, would have nothing to dread next time from the terraces of these houses.

Result of the day's work.

I have been thus minute in describing this day's proceedings, in order that the narrative may serve to explain future encounters, and give the reader some idea of the defences of Mexico, and of the means of attack which the Spaniards had in their power.

There was rest in the Camp of the Causeway

for a day or two; but these were very gainful days for Cortes, as not only did his new friend and ally, the King of Tezcuco, send him thirty thousand warriors under the command of his brother Ixtlilxochitl, called by Cortes "Istrisuchil," but (such are the charms of success!) the inhabitants of Xochimilco and of certain *pueblos* of the Otomies, who were the slaves* of the King of Mexico, joined the ranks of the besiegers. Book XI. Ch. I.

Cortes, finding that he had more brigantines than he needed, assigned three to Sandoval and three to Alvarado. He then prepared for another great attack upon the city, telling his new Indian allies that they must now show whether they really were friends.

Early in the morning, on the fourth day after the entrance into the city above recorded, Cortes commenced his second attack, accompanied by a very large body of his Indian allies (*que era infinita gente*). The short respite, however, which the Mexicans had enjoyed in these three days, had enabled them to undo all that the Spaniards had done, and to make all the defences much stronger. The result was, that the Spaniards did not advance further than the Plaza,—though there, and in its neighbourhood, they perpetrated an act of destruction which went to the hearts of the Mexicans. Cortes says that the determina- A second great attack.

* "Los Naturales de la Ciudad de Suchimilco, que está en el Agua, y ciertos Pueblos de Utumies, que es Gente Serrana, y de mas copia que los de Suchimilco, y eran Esclavos del Señor de Temixtitan, se vinieron á ofrecer, y dar por Vasallos de Vuestra Magestad." — LORENZANA, p. 252.

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tion manifested by the Mexicans on this day convinced him of two things:—that there would be very little spoil, and that the Mexicans would have to be totally destroyed.* His efforts, therefore, were now directed to see how he could mortify and depress them most, and so bring them, as he says, to a perception of their error.

The palace of Montezuma's father destroyed.

With this view, he on this day caused the palace of Montezuma's father to be destroyed, that palace where the Spaniards had been so hospitably received on their first coming to Mexico. The Spaniards also destroyed some adjacent buildings, which, though they were somewhat smaller than the palace, were even more delightful and beautiful (*mas frescas y gentiles*), and in which Montezuma had placed his aviary. This destruction must have been a pitiable sight, and Cortes was doubtless sincere in expressing great regret at being obliged to have recourse to such a proceeding. He had, however, the conqueror's ready excuse, that, though it distressed him, it distressed the enemy much more.†

Also the aviary.

Having set fire to these buildings, the Spaniards retired, the Mexicans attacking them in the rear with great fury.

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* "Viendo que estos de la Ciudad estaban rebeldes, y mostraban tanta determinacion de morir, ó defenderse, colegí de ellos dos cosas: la una, que habiamos de haber poca, ó ninguna de la riqueza, que nos habian tomado; y la otra, que daban ocasion, y nos forzaban á que totalmente les destruyessemos."—Lorenzana, p. 254.

† "Y aunque á mí me pesó mucho de ello, porque á ellos les pesaba mucho mas, determiné de las quemar, de que los Enemigos mostraron harto pesar, y tambien los otros sus Aliados de las Ciudades de la Laguna."—Lorenzana, p. 255.

But the culminating point of vexation for the Mexicans, on that day, must have been to see their former slaves, the Otomies, ranged against them. Bitter were the cannibal threats which passed between the Mexicans and the Indian allies of the Spaniards.

The next day, very early, after having heard mass, which was never omitted, the Spaniards returned to the attack, and, early though it was, the indefatigable Mexicans had repaired two-thirds of all that the Spaniards had destroyed on the preceding day. The Spaniards obtained no signal success this day, nor indeed for many days together, though each day they destroyed much and made some further advance into the town. This comparative slowness of movement is partly to be accounted for by their ammunition falling short. Notwithstanding this, the Spanish division under Cortes succeeded in taking several bridges which were in one of the principal streets,—namely, that which led to Tlacuba. It was a great object to gain this street, in order to effect a communication between the two camps of Cortes and Alvarado. Each day, the proceedings were very much like those on the first day, which I have described in detail. In the evening the Spaniards retreated, and then the Mexicans pursued them fiercely; "gluttonously" is the apt word which Cortes employs in speaking of this cannibal people.* .

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the cities bor-

* "Como ellos venían tan golosos tras nosotros."—Lorenzana, p. 258.

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dering on the lake, appreciating the success of the Spanish General, came and demanded pardon for their past offences, and offered alliance for the future. Cortes employed them most usefully in providing some shelter for his troops encamped on the causeway. He takes this opportunity of illustrating, in his letter to Charles the Fifth, the magnitude of the causeway, stating that the little town which was built to shelter the Spaniards and their allies, in all two thousand men,* was placed entirely on the causeway, there being room for a house on each side, and for a road between, which was sufficiently wide for men and horses to move along it "much at their ease."†

New alliances.

Magnitude of the causeway.

It remains now to be seen what the other divisions of the besiegers had been able to effect; and as, fortunately, Bernal Diaz was in Alvarado's division, we have a good account of what took place in that quarter. Their hardships and difficulties seem to have exceeded those of the division which Cortes commanded. They were not so much molested from the flat roofs of houses; but the breaches in the causeway on their side were more formidable, and their first attacks

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* The main body was always stationed at Cuyoacan.

† "Y vea Vuestra Magestad, que tan ancha puede ser la Calzada, que va por lo mas hondo de la Laguna, que de la una parte, y de la otra iban estas Casas, y quedaba en medio hecha Calle, que muy á placer á pié, y á caballo ibamos, y veníamos por ella; y habia á la contínua en el Real, con Españoles, y Indios, que los servian, mas de dos mil personas, porque toda la otra Gente de Guerra, nuestros Amigos, se aposentaban en Cuyoacan."—Lorenzana, p. 260.

Trials of the men in Alvarado's division.

were made without the support of any brigantines. Bernal Diaz gives a vivid picture of the severe toils and hardships they had to endure. He speaks of their many wounds,* of the hail of darts, arrows, and stones, which they had to encounter, of the mortification of finding, after they had gained some bridge-way or barricade with great labour in the course of any day, that the same work had to be done again the next morning. He also mentions the poorness of their food, which consisted of maize cakes, some herbs called *quilites*, and cherries. He describes the unwearied resolution and the craft of the Mexicans: how they dug deep pits underneath the water, so that the Spaniards, in their daily retreats, might unadvisedly fall into them; and how they drove stakes into the bed of the lake, which prevented the brigantines from approaching.

At last, Alvarado took a step somewhat similar to that which Cortes had adopted from the first, namely, making a small camp on the causeway, in a spot very similar to that which Cortes had chosen, where there were some idol-towers, and an open place in which the Spaniards could build their huts.† These huts, however, having

* Each day a new standard-bearer was required. "Pues quiero dezir de nuestros Capitanes, y Alfereces, y compañeros de vandera, que saliamos llenos de heridas, y las vanderas rotas, y digo, que cada dia aviamos menester un Alferez."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

† "Acordamos que todos nos fuessemos á meter en la calçada, en una placeta donde estavan unas torres de ídolos, que las aviamos ya ganado, y avia espacio para hazer nuestros ranchos."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

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been hastily thrown up, were no defence against the wet; and, after a hard day's fighting the soldiers had to tend their wounds* amidst rain, wind, and cold, which they did in the roughest manner, burning them with hot oil, and then compressing them with "blankets of earth,"† after which they ate, amid great heaps of mud, what Bernal Diaz calls, "that misery of maize cakes" (*essa miséria de tortillas*).

Of these things, however, they would probably have thought but little, but for the extreme severity of the out-post duty, which was managed in the following manner. When they had taken any barricade, bridge, or bad pass, forty soldiers kept guard there from evening until midnight; these were then relieved by forty other soldiers, who watched from midnight until two o'clock. This second watch was called, in the Spanish armies, "the watch of lethargy," or more generally, as soldiers are given to be brief, "the lethargy" (*la modorra*). The first forty soldiers, when

Mode of relieving guard.

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* The division of Pedro de Alvarado had, however, one great advantage in a soldier called Juan Catalan, who cured wounds by making the sign of the cross over them, and by incantation. "Un soldado que se dezia Juan Catalan que nos las santiguava, y ensalmava, y verdaderamente digo, que hallavamos que Nuestro Señor Jesu Christo era servido de darnos esfuerço demas de las muchas mercedes que cada dia nos hazia, y de presto sanavan."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151. In those days any escape from a regular practitioner was a great blessing.

† An expression I do not understand: it may perhaps mean that clay was used to keep the air out of the wound; but it seems more probable that it means to lie down on the bare ground. The following are the exact words:—"Luego nos quemavamos con azeite nuestras heridas, y apretallas con mantas de la tierra."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

relieved, were not allowed to return to the camp, but lay down where they were, and went to sleep. At two o'clock another company of forty soldiers relieved guard in the same fashion, so that at break of day there were a hundred and twenty soldiers at the pass. On those nights when an attack was apprehened, which was often the case, the whole company watched throughout the night.

It may easily be imagined that soldiers enduring daily such hardships would make tremendous efforts to bring the siege to a conclusion, which would sometimes be very imprudent and lead to signal reverses. So it fared with Alvarado's troops, for whom the Mexicans laid a very crafty ambuscade. In a deep and broad aperture of the causeway, where there had been a bridge, they made holes, and, at the same time, placed stakes to prevent the brigantines from acting, also fortifying the side of the aperture which they occupied. They then disposed their force in the following manner. They posted one division at the aperture; another at a spot within the town; and a third was appointed to take the Spaniards in the rear from Tlacuba.* The attack then commenced. The Spaniards repelled the first division of the Mexicans, and passed over this aperture at a spot where it was tolerably easy to ford, and where the holes had not been dug. Meanwhile, the third division

The Mexicans prepare an ambuscade for Alvarado's troops.

* It would seem, therefore, that the investment of Mexico was yet incomplete, unless, indeed, there was some side street unobserved by the Spaniards, by which the Mexicans could approach that part of the causeway which was near Alvarado's camp.

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of the Mexicans, acting in the rear, occupied all the attention of the Spanish cavalry. Alvarado, unlike the prudent Cortes, had not taken any step to see that a road lay open for retreat, and nothing was done to the aperture after it had been passed by the infantry. The victorious Spaniards pressed forwards into the town, gained two barricades, and found themselves in the midst of some large houses* and oratory towers. At this

* It is very desirable, both for the purposes of this siege, and also in order to understand the degree of civilization to which the Mexicans had attained in some things, to try and form some idea of their houses. It is curious enough, except that all persons so soon become used to a new country, and cease to describe its peculiarities, that the best account of a Mexican house which I have met with, is to be found in the letter sent by the town-council of Vera Cruz to Charles the Fifth immediately after the founding of that town. This account had reference only to the houses in the country towns, or in the country, which the expedition had seen on its way from Cozumel to Vera Cruz. It begins thus:—"There are certain large and well-arranged *pueblos:* the houses, in those parts where they have stone, are built of lime and squared stone; and the rooms are small and low, very much after the Moorish fashion *(muy amoriscados);* and in those parts where they have no stone, they build their houses of sun-burnt bricks, and plaster them over, and the roofs are of straw. There are houses belonging to the chiefs which are very airy, and with many rooms, for we have seen more than six court-yards *(patios)* in some houses, and the apartments very well arranged—each principal service by itself (*"cada principal servicio que ha de ser por sí."*—*Doc. Inéd.*, tom. 1, p. 454); and within the houses are wells and tanks (*albergas*), also rooms for the slaves and people of service, of whom they have many. Outside these houses, at the entrance, there is a large raised court, or even more than one, ascended by steps, and very well built, where they have their mosques, and their oratories, and their terraced walks, which go all round, and are very broad, and there they keep their idols, made of stone, or wood, or clay."—*Doc. Inéd.*, tom. 1, p. 454. It may be conjectured that many of the private houses in the capital were still better built; and it will be easily seen that such houses were soon convertible into fortresses. Peter Martyr, obtaining his intelligence from one of the messen-

spot, numerous bands of warriors poured out from their hiding-place; those Mexicans who had fled before the Spaniards, having drawn them on sufficiently, now turned upon them; and the Spaniards, unable to resist the combined attack, were soon put to flight. On fighting their way back to the great aperture, they found that the fordable part of it was occupied by a fleet of canoes, and that it was necessary to pass where the Mexicans had made the passage most dangerous. Here the enemy succeeded in laying hold of five Spaniards (it was always their object to take them alive for sacrifice), and the historian himself with much difficulty escaped from their grasp. He tells us, that when he reached dry land he fell senseless, overcome by the loss of blood, and by the exertions he had made; "And I say," he adds, "that when they clawed hold of me, in thought I commended myself to Our Lord God and to Our Lady his Blessed Mother, and I put forth my strength, whereby I saved myself, thanks be to God for the mercies which he shows unto me."*

Alvarado's division put to flight.

The Mexicans, emboldened by their success,

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gers sent to Charles the Fifth by Cortes, says that the roofs of the Mexican houses were made of a bituminous substance:—"In solo parum hospitantur propter humiditatem; tecta non tegulis sed bitumine quodam terreo vestiunt: ad solem captandum commodior est ille modus; breviore tempore consumi debere credendum est." —Dec. 5, cap. 10.

* "É digo, que quando me tenian engarrafado, que en el pensamiento yo me encomendava á Nuestro Señor Dios, é á Nuestra Señora su bendita Madre, y ponia la fuerça que he dicho, por donde me salvé, gracias á Dios por las mercedes que me haze." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

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made a vigorous attack upon Alvarado's camp that day, but were repelled by cannon.

Cortès was very angry when he heard of this disaster, and gave orders that, henceforward, on no occasion should the Spaniards advance without

securing a pathway for their retreat. He went over himself to see Alvarado's camp. But when he found how much they had done, and how far they had advanced, he could not blame them, he said, as much as he had done. In truth, by this time, three-fourths of the city had been taken,

Three-fourths of the city taken.

that is, three-fourths in magnitude, but not in density, for the densest part of the population lay in the district of the city, called Tlatelulco, round about the market-place, which was, I have no doubt, the oldest part of the town.

The camp of Gonsalvo de Sandoval was not blessed with a chronicler, and so we do not know anything of what passed in it; but we may conclude, from the well-approved valour of its commander, that it was a worthy rival to the others in heroic deeds.

The great aperture, which had already cost several lives to Alvarado's division, was not filled up without the loss of six more Spanish soldiers and four days of time. No mention is made of the loss of the Tlascalans, which, no doubt, was very severe, for they fought with exceeding bravery* throughout the war; but in any retreat—and the close of each day was generally a retreat with the Spaniards—these allies were a terrible embarrassment, and the first object was to clear the causeway of them before the Mexicans came down with the final tiger-like† spring with which they were wont to wind up the day's fighting.

It must not be supposed that the check which Alvarado's division had received, was altogether owing to his thoughtlessness. There was a keen rivalry amongst the several divisions; and it was

* "Nuestros amigos los de Tlaxcala nos ayudavan en toda la guerra mui como varones."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

† "Venian tan bravosos como tigres, y pié con pié se juntaron con nosotros."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 151.

a point of honour with them, which should gain the market-place first. Now, to enter the market-place, it was necessary to penetrate amongst an "infinite" number of *azoteas*, bridges, and broken causeways: indeed, each house was a sort of island fortress.* The commanders had to endure much importunity from their men: "Why not," they doubtless exclaimed, "make a continuous attack, instead of withdrawing in this way each day, and having so much of our work to do over and over again?" Cortes himself felt that remarks of this kind would occur to any reader of his despatches; and, accordingly, he informs the Emperor, that what looked so feasible could not be done on two accounts. If they did not retreat at night-fall, as had been their practice, they must either move their camp into the Plaza, or into the square of the great Temple, and thus they would be in the midst of the enemy, and liable to attack from morning till night. Or, on the other hand, they must keep their camp where it was, and establish outposts at the passes which they gained,—and if this latter alternative were adopted, he thought there would be too much work for the men, and such as they could not endure.† It may be inferred from this explana-

The common soldiers impatient.

Reasons of Cortes for retreating every evening.

* "En tal manera, que en cada Casa, por donde habiamos de ir, estaba hecha como Isla en medio de el Agua."—Lorenzana, p. 263.

† "Porque teniendo el Real en la Ciudad cada noche, y cada hora, como ellos eran muchos, y nosotros pocos, nos dieran mil rebatos, y pelearan con nosotros, y fuera el trabajo incomportable, y podian darnos por muchas partes. Pues guardar las Puentes Gente de noche, quedaban los Españoles tan cansados de pelear el día, que no se podia sufrir poner Gente en guarda de ellos."—Lorenzana, p. 257.

tion, that Cortes was more careful of his troops than Alvarado of his: we have already seen what severe watches were requisite in that division, and how ill the men fared.

The impatience of the soldiers grew to a great height, and was supported in an official quarter, —by no less a person than Alderete, the King's Treasurer. Cortes gave way, against his own judgment, to their importunities. There had all along been a reason for his reluctance, which, probably, he did not communicate to his men: namely, that he had not abandoned the hope that the enemy would still come to terms. "Finally," he says, "they pressed me so much that I gave way."

A general attack resolved upon.

The attack was to be a general one, in which the divisions of Sandoval and Alvarado were to co-operate; but Cortes, with that knowledge of character which belonged to him, particularly explained, that, though his general orders were for them to press into the market-place, they were not obliged to gain a single difficult pass which laid them open to defeat; "For," he says, "I knew, from the men they were, that they would advance to whatever spot I told them to gain, even if they knew that it would cost them their lives."* This wide discretion allowed to agents is the sign of a wise man.

On the appointed day, Cortes moved from his

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*"Conocia de sus Personas, que habian de poner el rostro, donde yo les dijesse, aunque supiessen perder las vidas."—Lorenzana, p. 265.

camp, supported by seven brigantines, and by more than three thousand canoes filled with his Indian allies. When his soldiers reached the entrance of the city, he divided them in the following manner. There were three streets which led to the market-place from the position which the Spaniards had already gained. Along the principal street, the King's Treasurer, with seventy Spaniards, and fifteen or twenty thousand allies, was to make his way. His rear was to be protected by a small guard of horsemen.

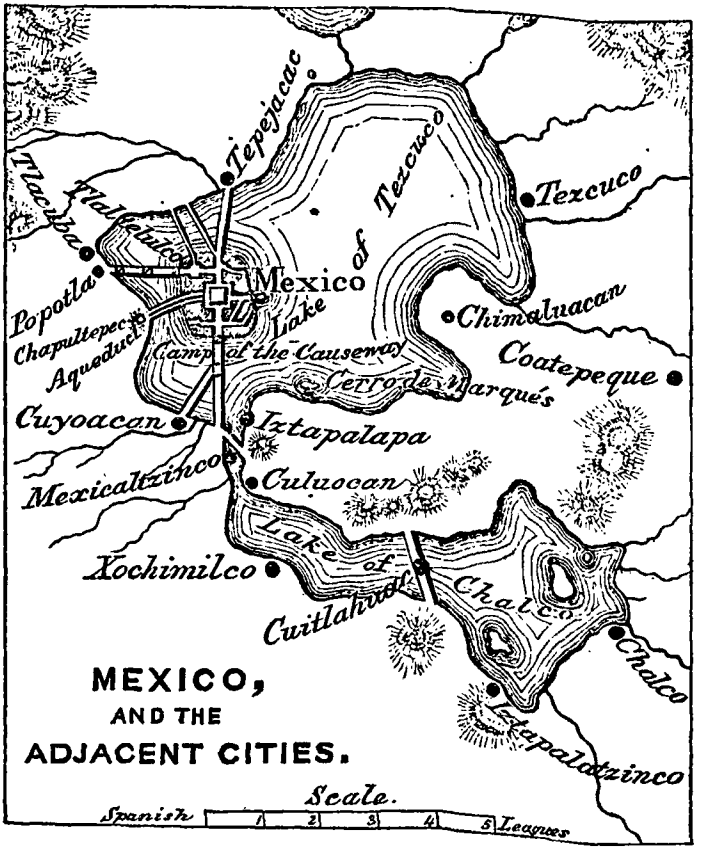
Dispositions on the side of Cortes for the attack.

The other two streets were smaller, and led from the street of Tlacuba to the market-place. Along the broader of these two streets, Cortes sent two of his principal captains, with eighty Spaniards and ten thousand Indians; he himself, with eight horsemen, seventy-five foot-soldiers, twenty-five musketeers, and an "infinite number" of allies, was to enter the narrower street. At the entrance to the street of Tlacuba, he left two large cannon with eight horsemen to guard them, and at the entrance of his own street, he also left eight horsemen to protect the rear.

Cortes having now buckled on his armour, and being about to undertake, contrary to his own judgment, one of the most remarkable and hazardous actions of his life, let us pause for a moment, amidst the clang of warlike preparation, to recollect that it was just at this time, perhaps on this very day, that another great hero in American history was, in the midst of dire discouragement, about to commence his long projected enterprize. It was in July, 1521, that Las Casas

A sudden reminiscence of a different kind of hero from Cortes.

set sail from Hispaniola to form his colony on the Pearl Coast—with what event awaiting him the reader well knows. It is desirable, however, to mention the fact, as such recollections connect the various portions of this history together, and



remind the reader that there were men, even in that day, who looked upon the ordinary course of conquest as a melancholy thing, and strove to make it otherwise. Thinking of such a man as Las Casas, amidst all the bloodshed and brutality of this siege of Mexico, is like the contemplation

of a swift, clear stream that brightly moves along, aiding human power, increasing human happiness, and reflecting the utmost light it can, in the midst of an embrowned, desolate, and rugged landscape, beset with all the horrors of a northern winter. But now having for a moment gladdened ourselves by the thought of Las Casas, and of his noble aspirations, we must go back to Cortes and his small band of hardened warriors, each one of them familiar with the slaughter of his fellows, as if it were his daily bread.

The great attack commenced.

The Spaniards and their allies made their entrance into the city with even more success and less embarrassment than on previous occasions. Bridges and barricades were gained, and the three main bodies of the army moved forwards into the heart of the city. The ever-prudent Cortes did not follow his division, but remained with a small body-guard of twenty Spaniards in a little island formed, I imagine, by the intersection of certain water streets, whence he encouraged the allies, who were occasionally beaten back by the Mexicans, and where he could protect his own troops against any sudden descent of the enemy from certain side streets.

Cortes in an islet.

His men ask leave to press on into the city.

He now received a message from those Spanish troops who had made a rapid and successful advance into the heart of the town, informing him that they were not far from the market-place, and that they wished to have his permission to push onwards, as they already heard the noise of the combats which the Alguazil Mayor and Pedro de Alvarado were waging from their respective

stations. To this message Cortes returned for answer that on no account should they move forwards without first filling up the apertures thoroughly. They sent an answer back, stating that they had made completely passable all the ground that they had gained; that he might come and see whether it were not so.

Cortes, like a wise commander, not inclined to admit anything as a fact upon the statement of others which could be verified by personal inspection, took them at their word, and did move on to see what sort of pathway they had made; when, to his dismay, he came in sight of a breach in the causeway, of considerable magnitude, being ten or twelve paces in width, and about twelve feet in depth, and which, far from being filled up, had been passed upon wood and reeds, and was entirely insecure in case of retreat. The Spaniards, "intoxicated with victory," as their Commander describes them, had rushed on, imagining that they left behind them a sufficient pathway.

They had not made good the pathway.

There was now no time to remedy this lamentable error, for when Cortes arrived near this "bridge of affliction," as he calls it, he saw many of the Spaniards and the allies retreating towards it, and when he came up close to it, he found the bridge-way broken down, and the whole aperture so full of Spaniards and Indians, that, as he says, there was not room for a straw to float upon the surface of the water. The peril was so imminent, that Cortes not only thought that the Conquest of Mexico was gone, but that the term of his life as well as of his victories had

come; and he resolved to die there fighting. All that he could do at first was to help his men out of the water; and, meanwhile, the Mexicans charged upon them in such numbers, that he and his little party were entirely surrounded. The enemy seized upon his person, and would have carried him off, but for the resolute bravery of some of his guard, one of whom lost his life there in succouring his master. The greatest aid, however, that Cortes had at this moment of urgent peril, was the cruel superstition of the Mexicans, which made them wish to take Malinché alive, and grudge the death of an enemy in any other way than that of sacrifice to their detestable gods. The captain of the body-guard seized hold of Cortes, and insisted upon his retreating, declaring that upon his life depended the lives of all of them. Cortes, though at the moment he felt that he should have delighted more in death than life, gave way to the importunity of this captain, and of other Spaniards who were near, and commenced a retreat for his life. His flight was along a narrow causeway at the same level as the water, an additional circumstance of danger, which, to use his epithet for them, those "dogs" had contrived against the Spaniards. The Mexican canoes approached this causeway on both sides, and the slaughter they were thus enabled to commit, both among the allies and the Spaniards, was very great. Meanwhile, two or three horses were sent to aid Cortes in his retreat, and a youth upon one of them contrived to reach him, though the others were lost. At

Cortes in urgent peril.

His escape.

last he and a few of his men succeeded in fighting their way to the broad street of Tlacuba, where, like a brave captain, instead of continuing his flight, he and the few horsemen who were with him turned round and formed a rear-guard to

Cortes gains the street of Tlacuba.

protect his retreating troops. He also sent immediate orders to the King's Treasurer and the other commanders to make good their retreat; orders the force of which was much heightened by the sight of two or three Spaniards' heads

Book XI. Ch. 1. which the Mexicans, who were fighting behind a barricade, threw amongst the besiegers.

Alvarado's division.

We must now see how it fared with the other divisions. Alvarado's men had prospered in their attack, and were steadily advancing towards the market-place, when, all of a sudden, they found themselves encountered by an immense body of Mexican troops, splendidly accoutred, who threw before them five heads of Spaniards, and kept shouting out "Thus will we slay you, as we have slain Malinché and Sandoval, whose heads these are." With these words, they commenced an attack of such fury, and came so closely to hand with the Spaniards, that they could not use their cross-bows, their muskets, nor even their swords. One thing, however, was in their favour. The difficulty of their retreat was always greatly enhanced by the number of their allies; but on this occasion the Tlascalans no sooner saw the bleeding heads, and heard the menacing words of the Mexicans, than they cleared themselves off the causeway with all possible speed.

The Tlascalans retreat in haste.

The Spaniards, therefore, were able to retreat in good order; and their dismay did not take the form of panic, even when they heard from the summit of the Temple the tones of that awful drum made of serpents' skin, which gave forth the most melancholy sound imaginable, and which was audible at two or three leagues' distance.* This

* "Tañian un atambor de mui triste sonido, en fin como instrumento de demonios, y retumbava tanto, que se oia dos, ó tres leguas, y juntamente con él muchos atabalejos." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

was the signal of sacrifice, and at that moment ten human hearts, the hearts of their companions, were being offered up to the Mexican deities.

The Mexican King sounds his horn.

A more dangerous, though not more dreadful, sound was now to be heard. This was the blast of a horn sounded by no less a personage than the Mexican King—which signified that his captains were to succeed, or to die. The mad fury with which the Mexican troops now rushed upon the Spaniards was "an awful thing" to see; and the historian, who was present at the scene, writing in his old age, exclaims, that, though he cannot describe it, yet, when he comes to think of it, it is as if he sees it "visibly" before him,* so deep was the impression it had made upon his mind.

But the Spaniards were not raw troops; and terror, however great, was not able to overcome their sense of discipline and their duty to each other as comrades. It was in vain that the Mexicans rushed upon them "as a conquered thing" (*como cosa vencida*); they reached their station, served their cannon steadily—although they had to renew their artillerymen,—and maintained their ground.

The appalling stratagem adopted by the Mexicans—of throwing down before one division of the Spanish army some of the heads of the prisoners they had taken from another division, and

* "Con qué rabia y esfuerço se metian entre nosotros á nos echar mano, es cosa de espanto, porque yo no lo sé aquí escrivir, que aora que me pongo á pensar en ello, es como si visiblemente lo viesse." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

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shouting that these were the heads of the principal commanders—was pursued with great success. They were thus enabled to discourage Sandoval, and to cause him to retreat with loss towards his quarters. They even tried with success the same stratagem upon Cortes, throwing before his camp, to which he had at last retreated, certain bleeding heads, which, they said, were those of "Tonatiuh" (Pedro de Alvarado), Sandoval, and the other *teules*. Then it was that Cortes felt more dismay than ever, "though," says the honest chronicler, who disliked the man, but admired the soldier, "not in such a manner that those who were with him should perceive in it much weakness."*

Sandoval's division retires.

After Sandoval had made good his retreat, he set off, accompanied by a few horsemen, for the camp of Cortes, and had an interview with him, of which the following account is given. "O Señor Captain! what is this?" exclaimed Sandoval; "are these the great counsels, and the artifices of war which you have always been wont to show us? How has this disaster happened?" Cortes replied, "O son Sandoval! my sins have permitted this; but I am not so culpable in the business as they make out, for it is the fault of the Treasurer, Juan de Alderete, whom I charged to fill up that difficult pass where they routed us, but he did not do so, for he is not accustomed to

Meeting of Sandoval and Cortes after the defeat.

* "Entonces dizen, que desmayó Cortés mucho mas de lo que antes estava él, y los que consigo traia, mas no de manera que sintiessen en él mucha flaqueza."—Bernaz Diaz, cap. 152.

wars, nor to be commanded by superior officers." At this point of the conference, the Treasurer himself, who had approached the captains in order to learn Sandoval's news, exclaimed, that it was Cortes himself who was to blame; that he had encouraged his men to go forward; that he had not charged them to fill up the bridges and bad passes,—if he had done so, he (the Treasurer) with his company would have done it;—and, moreover, that Cortes had not cleared the causeways in time of his Indian allies. Thus they argued and disputed with one another, for no one hardly is generous in defeat to those with whom he has acted. Indeed, a generosity of this kind, which will not allow a man to comment severely upon the errors of his comrades in misfortune, is so rare a virtue, that it scarcely seems to belong to this planet.

How few remain gentlemen after defeat.

There was little time, however, for altercation, and Cortes was not the man to indulge in more of that luxury for the unfortunate than human nature demanded. He had received no tidings of what had befallen the Camp of Tlacuba, and thither he despatched Sandoval, embracing him and saying, "Look you, since you see that I cannot go to all parts, I commend these labours to you, for, as you perceive, I am wounded and lame. I implore you, take charge of these three camps.* I well know that Pedro de Alvarado

* "Mirá, pues veis que yo no puedo ir á todas partes, á vos os encomiendo estos trabajos, pues veis que estoi herido y coxo; ruego os pongais cobro en estos tres reales." — Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

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and his soldiers will have behaved themselves as cavaliers, but I fear lest the great force of those dogs should have routed them."

Sandoval at Alvarado's camp.

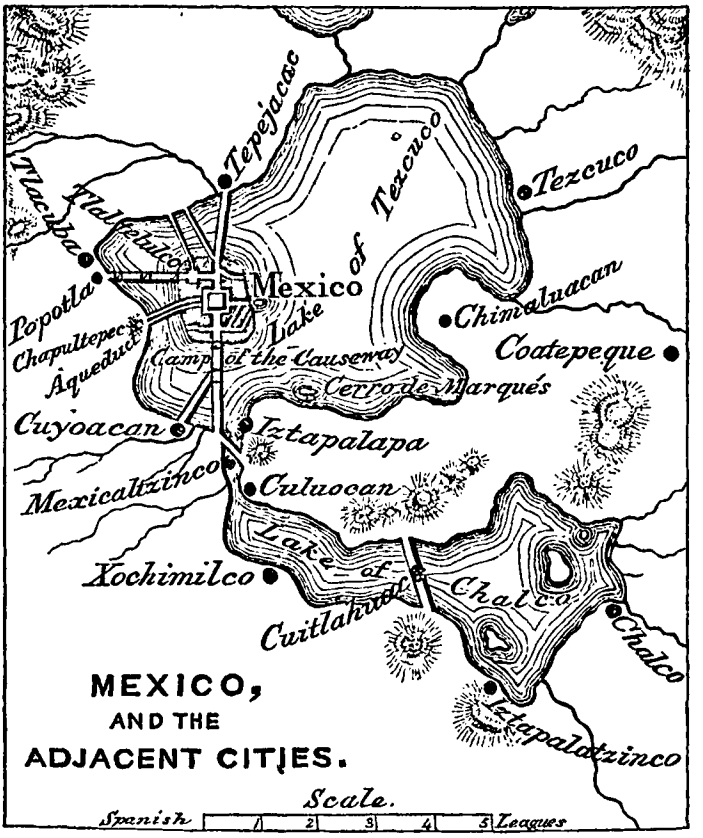
The scene now changes to the ground near Alvarado's camp. Sandoval succeeded in making his way there, and arrived about the hour of Vespers. He found the men of that division in the act of repelling a most vigorous attack on the part of the Mexicans, who had hoped that night to penetrate into the camp and to carry off all the Spaniards for sacrifice. The enemy were better armed than usual, some of them using the weapons which they had taken from the soldiers of Cortes. At last, after a severe conflict, in which Sandoval himself was hurt, and in which the cannon shots did not suffice to break the serried ranks of the Mexicans,* the Spaniards gained their quarters, and, being under shelter, had some respite from the fury of the Mexican attack.

Alvarado's men behold the sacrifice of their companions.

There, Sandoval, Pedro de Alvarado, and the other principal captains were standing together and relating what had occurred to each of them, when, suddenly, the sound of the sacrificial drum was heard again, accompanied by other musical instruments of a similar dolorous character. From the Camp of Tlacuba the great Temple was perfectly visible, and, when the Spaniards looked up at it for an interpretation of these melancholy tones, they saw their companions driven by blows and buffetings up to the place of sacrifice. The

* "Por mas Mexicanos que llevavan las pelotas, no les podian apartar."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

white-skinned Christians were easily to be distinguished amidst the dusky groups that surrounded them. When the unhappy men about to be sacrificed had reached the lofty level space on which these abominations were wont to be com-



mitted, it was discerned by their friends and late companions that plumes of feathers were put upon the heads of many of them, and that men, whose movements in the distance appeared like those of winnowers, made the captives dance before the image of Huitzilopochtli. When the dance was

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concluded, the victims were placed upon the sacrificial stones; their hearts were taken out and offered to the idols; and their bodies hurled down the steps of the Temple. At the bottom of the steps stood "other butchers" who cut off the arms and legs of the victims, intending to eat these portions of their enemies. The skin of the face with the beard was preserved. The rest of the body was thrown to the lions, tigers, and serpents. "Let the curious readers consider," says the chronicler, "what pity we must have had for these, our companions, and how we said to one another, 'Oh! thanks be to God, that they did not carry me off to-day to sacrifice me.'"* And certainly no army ever looked upon a more deplorable sight.

There was no time, however, for much contemplation; for, at that instant, numerous bands of warriors attacked the Spaniards on all sides, and fully occupied their attention in the preservation of their own lives.

In modern battles no dialogue.

Modern warfare has lost one great element of the picturesque in narrative, namely, in there being no interchange now of verbal threats and menaces between the contending parties; but in those days it was otherwise, and the Mexicans were able to indulge in the most fierce and malignant language. "Look," they said, "that is the way in which all of you have to die, for our gods have

* "Miren los curiosos Lectores que esto leyeren, que lástima terniamos dellos: y deziamos entre nosotros: O gracias á Dios, que no me llevaron á mí oy á sacrificar."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

promised this to us many times." To the Tlascalans their language was more insulting, and much more minutely descriptive. Throwing to them the roasted flesh of their companions and of the Spanish soldiers, they shouted, "Eat of the flesh of these *teules*, and of your brothers, for we are quite satiated with it; and, look you, for the houses you have pulled down, we shall have to make you build in their place much better ones with stones, and laminæ of stones, and likewise with hewn stone and lime, and the houses will be painted.* Wherefore, continue to assist these *teules*, all of whom you will see sacrificed."

The Mexicans, however, did not succeed in carrying off any more Spaniards for sacrifice that night. The Spanish camp had some few hours of repose, and some time to reckon up their losses, which were very considerable. They lost upwards of sixty of their own men, six horses, two cannon, and a great number of their Indian allies. Moreover, the brigantines had not fared much better, on this disastrous day, than the land forces. But the indirect consequences of this defeat were still more injurious than the actual losses. The allies from the neighbouring cities on the lake deserted the Spaniards, nearly to a man. The Mexicans regained and strengthened most of their positions; and the greatest part of the work of the besiegers seemed as if it would

The losses of the Spaniards.

* "Y mirad que las casas que aveis derrocado, que os hemos de traer para que las torneis á hazer mui mejores, y con piedras y planchas, y cal y canto, y pintadas."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 152.

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have to be done over again. Even the Tlascalans, hitherto so faithful, despaired of the fortunes of their allies, and could not but believe, with renewed terror, in the potency of the Mexican deities, kindred to, if not identical with, their own. Accordingly, they departed to their homes; and in the camp of Cortes no Indian remained but Ixtlilxochitl, the brother of the King of Tezcuco, with about forty friends and relations,—in the camp of Sandoval, the Cacique of Huaxocingo with about fifty men,—and in Pedro de Alvarado's camp, the brave Chichimecatl with two other chiefs and eighty Tlascalans. In a word, not more than two men out of every thousand of the allies remained to aid the Spaniards.

Desertion of the allies.

CHAPTER II.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE DEFEAT—THE SIEGE LANGUISHES—CORTES SENDS AID TO HIS INDIAN ALLIES—THE ALLIES RETURN TO THE CAMP OF CORTES—THE SIEGE IS PRESSED—THE MEXICANS WILL NOT TREAT WITH CORTES—MEXICO IS TAKEN.

THE King of the Mexicans improved his victory by sending round the news of it to his tributaries, informing them how successful he had been, assuring them that he would soon destroy the rest of the Spaniards, and begging them on no account to make peace with the enemy. The vouchers which his messengers carried were two heads of horses and some heads of Christians; and these trophies told the tale of victory in an undeniable manner.

The Mexican King encourages his tributaries.

One cannot always sympathize with one's Christian friends, and it is impossible not to feel occasionally some satisfaction when the beleaguered party, wronged as they had been in every way by the besiegers, and making one of the most gallant defences ever known in the history of sieges, should gain some advantage. The siege was not absolutely stopped on account of this defeat, but still the city had

The siege languishes.

Book XI. Ch. 2.

some relief. In the camp of Alvarado, for instance, where the men had seen but too clearly what was the fate of captives, there was no movement for four days; and, strange to say, the first attack on that side was, according to Cortes, devised and led by Chichimecatl, the brave Tlascalan. In the camp of Cortes little was attempted, and less effected, for ten days; and no entrance was made by the Spaniards which reached so far into the city as the Plaza, a spot which had been gained by them, as may be recollected, at an early stage of the proceedings.

The main cause, however, of this apparent inactivity is one which will surprise the reader, but, when well considered, will give him a great insight into the depth of policy of Cortes. At such a juncture an ordinary commander would have kept all his resources closely about him, and would not have been induced to send away a single man. But Cortes sent out a considerable force to assist his Indian allies of the town of Cuernavaca, who were suffering from the attack of some hostile Indians of a neighbouring city belonging to the Mexican faction. His own men disapproved of this, as it was natural that they should, and said that it was destruction to take men from the camp.*

Cortes sends assistance to his Indian allies.

Cortes also sent assistance to the Otomies, who were much pressed by the inhabitants of the province of Matalcingo, a people on whose

* "Tube mucha contradicion, y decian que me destruia en sacar Gente del Real."—Lorenzana, p. 272.

succour the Mexicans at that time placed great dependence.

The expeditions mentioned above were successful. The wounded men in the camp began to recover.* By great good fortune Cortés, at this juncture, received some gunpowder and some cross-bows from his town of Villa Rica; and the siege was recommenced.

The politic conduct of Cortes in sending succours to those of his Indian allies who were endangered, must have done good service in bringing them all back to his camp. They began to flock in, and, after receiving a lecture from Cortes, in which he told them that they were deserving of death, they were taken again into

The Indian allies return to the camp.

* The few Spanish women who were present at this siege, and of whom honorable mention ought to be made, must have been a great comfort to the wounded Spanish soldiers. One of them, named Beatriz de Palacios, a mulatto, was not only useful in nursing the sick, but she would saddle the horses of her husband's troop, and was known to take his place as sentinel. "Beatriz de Palacios, Mulata, aiudó mucho, quando fué hechado Cortés de México, y en este Cerco: era casada con un Soldado, dicho Pedro de Escobar; y sirvió tanto á su Marido, y á los de su Camarada, que hallándose cansado de pelear de Dia, tocándole la Guarda, y Centinela, la hacia por él, con mucho cuidado, y en dexando las Armas, salia al Campo á recoger Bledos, y los tenia cocidos, y adereçados, para su Marido, y los Compañeros. Curaba los Heridos, ensillaba los Caballos, y hacia otras cosas, como qualquiera Soldado; y esta, y otras fueron las que curaron á Cortés, y sus Compañeros, quando llegaron heridos á Tlaxcalla, y les hicieron de vestir, de Lienço de la Tierra, y las que queriendo Cortés, que se quedasen á descansar á Tlaxcalla, le dixeron: que no era bien, que Mugeres Castellanas, dexasen á sus Maridos, yendo á la Guerra, y que adonde ellos muriesen, moririan ellas. Estas fueron, Beatriz de Palacios, Maria de Estrada, Juana Martin, Isabel Rodriguez, y la Muger de Alonso Valiente, y otras." — Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. 4, cap. 96.

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his favour, and employed against the common enemy.

Pertinacity of the Mexicans.

On the other hand, the Mexicans remained as stiff-necked as ever. They had already endured forty-five days of siege: their allies had been conquered; and they themselves were beginning to feel the effects of starvation. But their resolution only rose with their difficulties, and misery lent strength to their resolves. "We found them with more spirit than ever,"* is the expression of Cortes in describing their conduct. He, therefore, though very unwillingly, came to the conclusion that he must destroy their city bit by bit, a necessity which must have been a great vexation to him, for he declares that Mexico was "the most beautiful thing in the world" (*la mas hermosa cosa del Mundo*). This plan of destruction he proposed to execute thoroughly, pulling down the houses of every street as he gained it; making that which was lofty level, and that which was water dry land.†

Cortes resolves to destroy Mexico.

On the first day of recommencing the attack, he was met and delayed by feigned proposals for peace; but, these coming to nothing, he began to execute his plan of gradual demolition, and as he had the assistance of one hundred and fifty thousand Indian allies, and as destruction is

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* "É quanto mas de estas cosas les deciamos, menos muestra viamos en ellos de flaqueza: mas antes en el pelear, y en todos sus ardides, los hallabamos con mas ánimo, que nunca."—Lorenzana, p. 279.

† "Lo que era Agua, hacerlo Tierra-firme."—Lorenzana, p. 279.

always a rapid process, he accomplished great things.

The next day he made his way into the Square, and ascended the highest platform of the Temple, because, as he says, he knew it vexed the enemy much to see him there. A stranger sight, one more animating to the Spaniards, more discouraging to the Mexicans, more picturesque in itself, and fraught with more matter for stern reflection, cannot well be imagined. It was no hideous Idol-god of War that had stepped down from its pedestal, but a majestic living man, clad in resplendent armour, who directed the fight below, and fulfilled the prophecies which had been uttered by the priests and necromancers—those safe and easy prophecies of disaster, sure to be fulfilled, at some time or other, in the life of any man, or any people, prophesied against. When night came on, the Spaniards and their allies retired, pursued by the Mexicans, but still, by means of ambuscades, contriving in their retreat to slay many of their enemies. Thus, with little variation, the siege continued for several days, until, by an ambuscade more dexterous than usual, Cortes contrived to cut off five hundred of the bravest and foremost men of the city, whom his cannibal allies devoured.*

Not Huitzilopochtli, but Cortes, directs the fight from the summit of the temple.

Cortes thinks that the result of the ambus-

* "Y aquella noche tubieron bien que cenar nuestros Amigos, porque todos los que se mataron, tomaron, y llevaron hechos piezas para comer."—Lorenzana, p. 283.

cade just recorded was most advantageous for the besiegers, and was the cause of the city being speedily subdued. But, indeed, it is evident that the brief success which the enemy attained, when Cortes, overcome by importunity, made that injudicious attack upon the city, was the expiring effort of the Mexicans. It appears that they were suffering now the extremes of hunger, going out at night to fish in the waters about their houses, and seeking a miserable sustenance in herbs and roots. Upon the wretched people so employed Cortes made an onslaught very early in the morning, and slew eight hundred of them, for the most part women and children.

Famine in Mexico.

Meanwhile, the Indian allies of Cortes thickened around the contest, as a flock of birds of rapine over carrion, and darkened the outskirts of the devoted city. They came in such multitudes, that, as he himself says, there was no taking any account of them. The proud Mexico, hitherto unconscious of a conqueror, was penetrated by the Spanish forces on all sides, till at length the market-place was gained by the troops of Alvarado, and free communication was opened and maintained between his camp and that of Cortes. It is curious to note the change in the language now addressed by the Mexicans to the Tlascalans and the other Spanish allies. When the townsmen saw these Indians burning and destroying on all sides, they tauntingly bade them continue doing so, as they would have to build up anew what they were then destroying, if not for them (the Mexicans), at least, for their own friends, the

Free communication between the camps of Alvarado and Cortes.

Spaniards.* Cortes afterwards comments upon this prophecy in a manner that is anything but chivalrous or gentlemanly (indeed, conquerors on their own account seldom are distinguished gentlemen),† for he adds, "In this last respect it pleased God that they turned out to be true prophets, for they, the allies, are those who are commencing to rebuild."‡

Cortes now possessed no less than seven-eighths of the city, as he perceived on looking from a great tower which adjoined the market-place. Still, the enemy did not give way, and, as the powder of Cortes was failing, he caused a catapult to be constructed, and placed on a raised platform, twelve feet in height, which was in the middle of the market-place, whereon the Mexicans had been accustomed to hold their games, and whereon, as I imagine, gladiatorial shows had been performed. But this catapult was not constructed properly, and failed to terrify the enemy. The greater part of them were now, however, only food for an almost unresisted slaughter, which, after two or three days interval, was recommenced. The Spaniards found the streets full of women and children, and other helpless persons, dying of hunger. Cortes renewed his proposals for peace.

Cortes constructs a catapult.

* "Decian á nuestros Amigos, que no ficiessen sino quemar, y destruir, que ellos se las harian tornar á hacer de nuevo, porque si ellos eran vencedores, ya ellos sabian, que habia de ser assí, y si no, que las habian de hacer para nosotros."—Lorenzana, p. 286.

† Julius Cæsar always excepted.

‡ "Y de esto postrero plugo á Dios, que salieron verdaderos, aunque ellos son los que las tornan á hacer."—Lorenzana, p. 286.

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The warriors in Mexico gave only dissembling answers. The conflict was accordingly renewed, and twelve thousand citizens perished on this occasion, for there was no saving their lives from the cruelty of the Indian allies.*

12,000 Mexicans are slain.

The next day the Mexicans, seeing the multitudes that were arrayed against them, and that, to use the graphic language of Cortes, there was no room for them, except upon the dead bodies of their own people, demanded a conference; and when Cortes arrived at a certain barricade he was met by some of the principal men. Their address to him savoured of a wild despair, but did not look as if they had any authority to treat for peace. They asked why,—since he was a Child of the Sun, and the Sun in so short a time as one day and one night went round the whole world,—did not Cortes as swiftly finish their slaughter, and release them from such suffering; for now they desired to die, and to go to their Huitzilopochtli, who was waiting for them to rejoice with.† Cortes said everything in reply which could induce them to treat for peace; but all his efforts were in vain. He also sent to them one of their principal chiefs, whom he had cap-

The Mexicans demand a conference.

* "Muertos, y presos pasaron de doce mil Animas, con los quales osaban de tanta crueldad nuestros Amigos, que por ninguna via á ninguno daban la vida, aunque mas reprendidos, y castigados de nosotros eran."—Lorenzana, p. 291.

† "Que pues ellos me tenían por Hijo del Sol, y el Sol en tanta brevedad como era en un dia, y una noche, daba vuelta á todo el Mundo, que porque yo assí brevemente no los acababa de matar, y los quitaba de penar tanto, porque ya ellos tenian deseos de morir, y irse al Cielo para su Ochilobus, que los estaba esperando para descansar."—Lorenzana, p. 292.

tured, and who, after listening to the arguments of Cortes, had promised to do his utmost to promote peace. This Chief was received with reverence by the Mexicans, and brought before Quauhtemotzin, the King; but, it is said, that, when he began to talk of peace, the King immediately ordered him to be slain and sacrificed. It seems that the Mexicans, as often happens in difficult negociation, had lost the power of taking more than one view of their position. They were in that state of mind in which the variations of thought, and the vacillations of temper are alike prevented by a mental process, which, if it were conscious and intentional, might be aptly illustrated by the practice of those desperate or determined captains who nail their colours to the mast. In fine, they were under the dominion of a "fixed idea," and the only answer which Cortes received to his overtures for peace was a furious attack on the part of the Mexicans, who exclaimed that their only wish was to die. Many of them were slain, and the Spanish captains returned to their camps for that day.

The Mexicans no longer amenable to wise counsel.

Renewal of the attack on the part of the Mexicans.

The next day Cortes made an entry into the city, but did not attempt to penetrate beyond that part of it which he had already gained. On the contrary, approaching a barricade, he addressed some of the Mexican chiefs whom he knew (Cortes seems to have possessed in a high degree the royal accomplishment of remembering faces), and asked them why their King did not come to treat with him about peace? Finally,

Cortes makes fresh overtures for peace.

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after some delay, it was agreed that on the next day the King should come to confer with Cortes in the market-place, and Cortes accordingly caused a lofty platform to be prepared for the interview.

Cortes, in vain, seeks a conference with the King of Mexico.

But when the time for the conference arrived, instead of the King, there came five of his principal lords, who made excuses for him, saying that he feared to appear before the Spanish General. Cortes did all that he could to win over these chiefs, giving them food,—by their ravenous way of devouring which, he perceived how pressing was their hunger. He also sent some food as a present for the King. The envoys did not, however, hold out any hope that Quauhtemotzin would attend a conference. Still Cortes persevered in sending assurances by them to the King, that he might come in safety; and so this conference ended.

Early on the ensuing morning the five chiefs repaired to the camp of Cortes, and said that their King had consented to meet him in the market-place; and Cortes, therefore, did not allow his Indian allies to enter the city. But when he had gone himself to the appointed spot, and had waited several hours, and the King did not make his appearance, Cortes summoned in the allies,

The slaughter renewed.

the battle, or rather the slaughter, recommenced, and on that day there were slain, or taken prisoners, no fewer than forty thousand Mexicans. So great were the cries and lamentations of the women and children, that there was no person (Cortes means no Spanish person) whose

heart it did not break to hear them.* But the Spaniards could not prevent the slaughter, for they were only about nine hundred, and the allies more than one hundred and fifty thousand in number.

The last day of the siege.

The final day of Mexico had come. The besieged retained now only a small corner of their city. Their King, instead of occupying one of those spacious palaces, in comparison with which the royal dwellings of the Old World were poor and mean, was obliged to take refuge in a boat. The order of the day, on the part of the Spaniards, was as follows: Sandoval was to force his way with the brigantines into a deep part of the lake at the rear of those houses which were still held by the Mexicans.† Alvarado was to enter the market-place, but was not to commence his attack until Cortes should order him to do so by a signal agreed upon,—namely, the firing of a musket. Cortes himself was to bring up three heavy cannon, in order to be able to inflict severe loss upon the Mexicans without coming to close combat with them, for, with their vast numbers, they might suffocate the Spaniards, if the ranks were once intermingled.

All these arrangements having been made,

* "Y era tanta la grita, y lloro de los Niños, y Mugeres, que no habia Persona, á quien no quebrantasse el corazon."—Lorenzana, p. 296.

† According to Clavigero, this was a sort of harbour entirely surrounded with houses, where the vessels of the merchants used to land their goods when they came to the market of Tlaltelulco. — See Clavigero, *Storia Antica del Messico*, tom. 3, lib. 10, pp. 227-8.

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and the approaches commenced, Cortes ascended to a terraced roof; and, from that height, addressed some of the principal men of the city, whom he knew, asking them why their King would not come, and suggesting, that as they were in such extremities that resistance was impossible, they should take such measures as would prevent all of them losing their lives. They should, therefore, summon their Prince to his presence, and have no fear. Two of them departed with this message, and shortly afterwards returned with the principal person in the city next after the King, who was called the *Cihuacuatl.* He informed Cortes that the King would by no means appear before him, preferring death; that he himself was sorry for this determination, but that Cortes must do what seemed good to him. Cortes replied that the Cihuacuatl might return to his men, and that he and they would do well to prepare themselves for battle. Meanwhile, an immense number of men, women, and children made their way out towards the Spaniards, hurrying in such a manner that they cast themselves into the water, and were suffocated amidst the multitude of dead bodies that already lay there.

Cortes counsels the Mexicans to yield.

The dead bodies were so numerous, that they were found afterwards lying in heaps in the streets; for thus the Mexicans had concealed their losses, not liking to throw the bodies into the water for fear of their being found by the brigantines. The number of those who died from the effects of hunger, pestilence, and drinking salt water, amounted to more than fifty thousand. Fifty thousand

The dead in Mexico.

souls! In studying wars, we acquire an almost flippant familiarity with great loss of life, and hardly recognize what it is. We have to think what a beautiful creature any man or woman is, for at least one period of his or her life, in the eyes of some other being; what a universe of hope is often contained in one unnoticed life; and that the meanest human being would be a large subject of study for the rest of mankind. We need, I say, to return upon such homely considerations as the above, before we can fairly estimate the sufferings and loss to mankind which these little easy sentences,—"There perished ten thousand of the allies on this day," "By that ambuscade we cut off nineteen hundred of the enemy," "In the retreat, which was well executed, they did not lose more than five thousand men,"—give indication of. It was in vain that Cortes tried to prevent the slaughter of the miserable people, who now made their way out, by posting Spaniards in the streets through which they had to pass. His Indian allies slew fifteen thousand of them on that day.

Reading of wars we become accustomed to think little of slaughter.

Still the chiefs and warriors, hunger-stricken, encompassed, and overlooked* as they were, maintained their position upon some terraces and houses, and also in boats upon the water. Cortes ordered the cannon to be discharged; but neither did this induce them to lay down their arms. It

The desperation of the besieged.

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* "Ni les aprovechaba disimulacion, ni otra cosa, porque no viessemos su perdicion, y su flaqueza muy á la clara."—Lorenzana, p. 299.

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The last attack.

was now evening, and the Spanish General commanded the musket to be fired which was the signal for the general attack. The Mexican position was immediately forced, and its defenders driven into the water, where some of them now surrendered. At the same moment the brigantines entered the harbour, ploughing through the fleet of Mexican canoes, which were instantly scattered in flight. A brigantine, commanded by a man named Garcia Holguin, pursued a particular canoe in which there appeared to be people of condition (*gente de manera*). His cross-bowmen in the prow were taking aim at those in the canoe, when a signal was made from it that the King was there. The canoe was immediately captured, and the unfortunate Quauhtemotzin, together with the King of Tlacuba, was found in it; and both Kings were taken at once to Cortes. Cortes received the King of Mexico with courtesy. Quauhtemotzin advanced to him and said, "I have done all that, on my part, I was obliged to do, to defend myself and my people, until I came into this state; now you may do with me that which you please;" and so saying, he put his hand upon a poignard which Cortes wore, requesting that he would kill him with it. But Cortes spoke kindly to him, and bade him have no fear. The King being captured, all opposition ceased, and what remained of Mexico was taken.

Capture of the King of Mexico.

This day, memorable in the annals of American history, was a Tuesday, the day of St. Hippolytus, the 13th of August, 1521. The siege, according to the computation of Cortes, who

Duration of the siege.

reckons that it began on the 30th of May, had lasted seventy-five days. We cannot give a better description of its fearful results than in the simple words of an eye-witness, who says, "It is true, and I swear 'Amen,' that all the lake and the houses and the barbacans were full of the bodies and heads of dead men,* so that I do not know how I may describe it. For, in the streets, and in the very courts of Tlaltelulco, there were no other things, and we could not walk except amongst the bodies and heads of dead Indians. I have read the destruction of Jerusalem; but whether there was such a mortality in that I do not know."†

Thus fell the great city of Mexico. The nature of the conquest, the disposition of the conqueror, the extent of territory conquered, above all, the alliances by which the conquest was effected, all combined to produce a very different state of things from that under which, in the course of this narrative, we have seen the West India Islands conquered and depopulated. Again, the Conquest of Mexico occurring at a period when the Home Government had acquired

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* It is worthy of note that the Mexicans did not, even under the pressure of famine, devour their own people; they were, therefore, cannibals only when victory furnished them with the savoury morsel of a dead enemy.

† "Es verdad, y juro amen, que toda la laguna y casas, y barbacoas estavan llenas de cuerpos y cabeças de hombres muertos, que yo no sé de que manera lo escriva. Pues en las calles, y en los mismos patios del Tatelulco, no avia otras cosas, y no podiamos andar sino entre cuerpos y cabeças de Indios muertos. Yo he leido la destruicion de Jerusalem; mas si en ella huvo tanta mortandad como esta, yo no lo sé."—Bernal Diaz, cap. 156.

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a little more insight into the management of colonies, will also tend to make the fate of the nations now conquered very different from that of the islanders. The great extent and riches of New Spain will for some time attract the attention of the Spanish government to that country, as its chief colony; and, henceforward, even the greater islands, such as Hispaniola and Cuba, lately the centres of government, will be chiefly interesting as affording ample proof, on a small scale, of the immense misgovernment which they have undergone.

Nature and result of the conquest.

By that splendid fatality which attaches itself to remarkable sites, Mexico, which had been the queen of cities in the New World, will, when it becomes Spanish Mexico, and when a beautiful cathedral is placed upon the exact spot where stood the accursed temple of the god of war—when the exquisite gardens of Montezuma have given way to formal *alamedas* (for the Spaniards love not many trees)—when the vast expanse of waters shall, by the application of cunning art, have been withdrawn, leaving wide, dreary, arid spaces of waste land,—still be a ruling, queenlike city, and still demand a large attention from the civilized world.

Mexico still a queen amongst cities.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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